

Mikhail Gorbachev's speech at CPSU Central Committee plenary meeting

Here follows the full text of the speech of Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, at the plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee on 18 February 1988 —

Comrades.

Our plenum is taking place at an important period of perestroika, or restructuring. The democratisation of social life and radical economic reform demand from the Party a clear perspective of things to be done.

The Politburo is being guided by these considerations in working out a concept of the 19th Party Conference. It is to determine much in the Party's strategic work.

No matter what positions we might adopt to approach the determination of ways of developing our economy, culture, social and intellectual life, it is man with his political and intellectual image, his skill, his patriotism and internationalism, his ability for creative work, his civic position and activity that will always be the decisive factor.

There is absolutely no doubt that everything that concerns school, education and upbringing is directly linked to the development of socialism, to perestroika. Moreover, it is its major direction.

I'll recall that way back in the first, most difficult years after the Revolution, Vladimir Lenin regarded the creation of the Soviet school as urgent business of the party.

This is clear because the future of socialism, and there is no exaggeration here, depended on school, on education and upbringing of the new individual.

The question is just as acute today, when our society is carrying out a revolutionary transition to a qualitatively new state.

It needs citizens who are educated, dedicated and committed to socialism, who are at the same time active, searching and able to live and work in conditions of democracy, economically independent collectives, and in an atmosphere of growing economic and social responsibility for oneself and for the country.

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Comrade Yegor Ligachev and other speakers have described the role of the school at all levels in bringing up such an individual — I won't repeat that.

But if we make such high demands on school, what an important and authoritative figure the teacher must be. What a vast knowledge, gift of teaching and skill he should have.

Here is, comrades, the 'basic link' in the restructuring of the entire system of education.

Sure, one needs, and as soon as possible, a new organisation of education, new study programmes and material and technical facilities, including computers.

But without people who devote their knowledge and their heart to our children, without the teacher with a capital 'T', all that may remain only formal and a costly innovation with no relation to real life.

The teacher is a major protagonist of perestroika. Should he support us with conviction, sense and passion, perestroika will gain many new sincere advocates and fighters, successors to the revolutionary socialist cause.

But if the support is formal, and the teacher remains indifferent or neutral, who will be able to predict the social stagnation and backward movement this indifference might produce.

Of course, there is always hope for life itself: today it speaks the language of perestroika — the honest, frank language of the truth, and this is probably the best social pedagogics.

Nonetheless, we pin hopes for the future largely on the work of our school — which is only natural — with its own restructuring, its own teaching talents and creative pursuits of the Soviet teacher.

The attitude to the teacher must be radically, resolutely changed, without delay or hesitation.

He must be relieved of petty patronage, and suspicion towards his pursuits and findings must be lifted. He should be relieved of duties other than teaching, his time and strength must be released for the main task.

All obstacles and barriers in the way of innovation in pedagogics must be removed, and decent material conditions must be created for the teacher's creative endeavour. This is the duty of party and local government bodies.

Wonderful innovative teachers work in the multinational Soviet school. They are look-

ing for their own ways in training and upbringing children. Their names are well known.

The more there are of such teachers of the highest qualification, the more often will original collectives of like-minded teachers emerge, and the quicker will our schools be rid of routine, formalism and the spirit of immobilisation.

Our children, our grandchildren and the entire cause of revolutionary restructuring will benefit from that.

Another important direction of work is the material base of the secondary and higher school. I mean all kinds of education and training and all types of educational establishments.

It is obvious that in the future, too — both in the centre and in the provinces — we ought to look for extra possibilities for developing and strengthening the educational facilities. There can be no alternative to this.

Our plenum has examined issues of implementing education reform from broad state positions. The main thing is that we ought to go through with the reform of the secondary and higher school everywhere.

No procrastination, half-measures or reticence should be allowed. It is necessary to act consistently and purposefully.

Over these two days we have had a rather fruitful discussion. It has shown once again how many problems have been accumulated, how stubbornly we are to work.

The general line is clear: the Soviet school should be raised to a qualitatively new level. On this we are unanimous.

But, I think, it would be wrong to define now, at the plenum, all specific ways to be taken in the renewal of the educational system.

This is not easy to do. The decisive word here should belong to broad sections of the public, above all to specialists — teachers, educators, and scientists.

Let the decisions of our plenum become the party's political recommendation to the teachers who are preparing for their regular congress.

Let officials working in higher and specialised secondary education think about that too. No doubt, such an approach will be in the spirit of democratisation, in the spirit of perestroika.

Comrades, in my speech I would like to dwell on some key ideological aspects of perestroika, namely: on the ideological interpretation of our work, for nothing passes

people's consciousness by, nothing is done without it.

I would also like to use this opportunity to raise tentatively some of the issues which are to be pondered on and discussed in the run-up to the 19th All-Union Party Conference.

At present, having entered the decisive stage in the effort to translate into life the decisions adopted, when policy is becoming daily practice and perestroika has been given full play, the vital interest of tens of millions of people, all of society, is being affected to an ever-growing extent.

Issues to which replies seem to have been given have become topical again.

People want to know better the essence and purpose of perestroika, the essence of changes that have begun in society, they want to understand where we are moving, what heights we are seeking to attain, what we understand by the new quality of society which we want to acquire.

This desire is quite natural: we have started overhauling forms of social life, we are mastering new things and discarding outdated stereotypes.

The change affects people's consciousness and psychology, their interests, their status in society and in work collectives.

There's no concealing the fact that many good people even got used in the past to abuses and failings, and became indifferent to them and slackened their social activity.

At the beginning, many failed to grasp the essence of the changes started, failed to see that perestroika is opening up new objectives in life, elevating the people themselves, that it is in full accord with their material and intellectual interests.

Perestroika makes a special claim on those who lived not in accordance with their work and not by conscience, on those who performed poor work. I don't mention those who violated the laws and morality of socialist society.

Such is, I would say, the complex political and ideological situation in which we have to act. The party has to literally fight for perestroika in production and in the spiritual sphere.

Of course, this fight does not acquire here the form of class antagonisms. But we see, comrades, how acute it is.

Fervent discussions are under way on obstacles in the way of perestroika. People are worried that the innovative decisions of the January and June plenary meetings of the CPSU central committee are being implemented slowly and with difficulties.

For the first time in many decades we really feel the socialist pluralism of views. This is something unaccustomed, and it is being assessed in different ways; it demands study, analysis and elucidation.

Behind all that we must see the principal thing — growing support for the policy of restructuring on the part of the people.

We say that we support and will support everything that benefits socialism, and reject and will reject everything that damages the people's interests.

We see that there is confusion in the minds of some people: are we not retreating from the positions of socialism, especially when we introduce new, unaccustomed forms of economic management and social life, are we not revising the Marxist-Leninist teaching itself?

No wonder that there have emerged 'defenders' of Marxism-Leninism and mourners for socialism who believe that both are under threat.

Whence is this coming? What is the cause of such fears?

It seems that perestroika itself is being often understood in different ways.

Some regard it as face-lifting, as a kind of 'adjustment' of the existing mechanism that does operate, poorly as it were, while it is not clear how the new one will work.

Others demand the dismantling of the very system of socialism and proclaim the path followed by people for decades false and leading to nowhere, deny offhand the values of socialism and borrow alternatives to them from the arsenal of bourgeois liberalism and nationalism.

Still others turn to radical phraseology, call for leaping over stages of socialist development, ignoring the logic of perestroika.

There is no exaggeration, no deliberate exacerbation of the problem in what I am saying. Yes, all this is taking place.

This situation has been engendered by the scope of perestroika, its deepening and advancement to new frontiers, when the majority has realised that our goals and plans are realistic, that they, using Lenin's expression, are "in earnest and for a long time".

One should not fail to take into account the immense difficulties connected with re-orientation of thinking on matters of principle.

A similar situation already took place in our history. In working out his co-operative plan, Lenin pointed out: "... We have to admit that there has been a radical modification in our whole outlook on socialism."

But we know what efforts the party had to apply for that. This is evidenced by discussions of those years. It took Lenin's authority and genius to win support in the party and in the country for the new approach to socialism.

We should learn well the lessons of that period. This is of vital importance for us now.

Perestroika compels us to look in a new way on some customary definitions and compare the path covered and yet to be taken with the criteria of progress, with the goals of building a new society formulated by the classics of Marxism-Leninism.

In other words, we are to compare the directions of our practical work with the chief beacons showing the way to the communists for more than a century.

And we are not only to repeat the set truths for the sake of a ritual, but to look for the answer to many questions raised by the current situation.

This is why, comrades, the problems of ideological activity, questions of the theory of socialism and perestroika assume such vast importance.

One cannot say that we have overlooked ideological and theoretical matters. They are widely reflected in the political report of the central committee to the 27th Congress of the party, in the new edition of the CPSU Programme, in the materials of the plenary meeting of the central committee and in a number of other party documents.

It would be impossible to pose the tasks of perestroika in the economy, in political, social and cultural spheres of society without

a reliance on theory, without ideological substantiation.

In the documents devoted to the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution, we were striving to give an objective, balanced appraisal of the road traversed by the Soviet people and to answer many complex questions agitating Soviet people.

It should be emphasised that there is now an objective need to approach these questions taking into account new demands, and analysing them thoroughly.

It is precisely the party, equipped with scientific knowledge of the past and present and of the tendencies that have real prospects of development, that is obliged to assume the lead in the processes of shaping socialist consciousness in society. It is precisely the party that can and must theoretically elucidate the new stage of socialist construction, taking into account the novelty brought to it by perestroika.

It is the party that can select and put to the service of the entire society what really promotes socialism, meets the interests of its development and advances us to socialist, and not some alien 'borrowed', aims.

It is certainly above all the striving to resolve the most burning problems caused by the stagnation of the previous period that made us aware of the need for perestroika.

The wider perestroika develops, the more understandable its overall sense and importance for the destiny of socialism becomes.

The awareness has been established now that perestroika is an objectively necessary stage of the development of Soviet society, whose essence is a transition to its new qualitative state.

We must ensure radical changes in the productive forces and relations of production, revolutionary renewal of social and political structures, and the growth of spiritual and intellectual potential of society.

We are striving in the present conditions to revive the Leninist look of the new system, to rid it of the accumulations and deformations, of everything that shackled society and prevented it from realising the potential of socialism in full measure.

And, which is the main thing, we are striving to impart new quality to socialist society, taking into account all the realities of the world of today.

The essence of socialism lies in asserting the power of the working people, the priority of the benefit of man, the working class and the entire people.

In the final account, the task of socialism is to put an end to social alienation of man, characteristic of the exploiter society, alienation from power, from the means of production, from the results of one's work and from spiritual values.

The October Revolution opened the way to resolving this historic task. The establishment of the power of the working people, abrogation of private property of the means of production and elimination of the exploitation of man by man have been steps of pivotal importance. These are the fundamental gains of socialism.

Over 70 years our party and people have been inspired by the ideas of socialism and have been building it.

But because of external and internal causes we have been unable to fully realise the Leninist principles of the new social system.

This was seriously hampered by the cult

of personality; the system of management by command and administration that formed in the '30s; bureaucratic, dogmatic and voluntarist aberration and arbitrariness, and the late '70s-early '80s lack of initiative, and hindrances, that have led to stagnation.

These phenomena, and what has remained of them and come down to the present, should become things of the past.

In this lies the answer to those who express their doubt, that we are retreating from socialism, from its foundations laid down by generations of Soviet people.

No, we do not retreat even a step from socialism, from Marxism-Leninism, from everything that has been gained and created by the people.

But we decisively reject a dogmatic, bureaucratic and voluntarist legacy, as it has nothing in common either with Marxism-Leninism or with genuine socialism.

Creative Marxism-Leninism is always an objective, profound scientific analysis of developing reality.

It is a critical analysis which does not look away from anything, which does not conceal anything, which does not fear any truth. Only such analysis is conducive to socialism.

There are no, nor can there be any limits to truly scientific quest. Questions of theory cannot and must not be decided by decrees.

Free competition of minds is needed. Our social thinking stands to gain from this. Its prognosticating capacity will be enhanced and, hence, its ability to serve as a reliable basis for working out the party's policy will increase.

Marxism-Leninism is a scientific basis of party approach to the cognition of social development, to the practice of communist construction. This is an approach inherent in which are humanism of aims, creative principle, objectivity and honesty in the appraisal of reality, high exactingness to oneself and self-criticism.

We wish to really analyse and comprehend our achievements and accumulated problems and learn the lessons for work in conditions of perestroika and the renewal of Soviet society.

It is precisely for this reason that we look so closely back on our Soviet past. This is why matters of history are so important to us.

What do we mean when we speak of creating a genuine, objective history of the party and Soviet society?

This question does not boil down to just mentioning some or other people, to doing justice to those who were unjustifiably forgotten, though this is an important, inseparable and, I would say, humane part of this huge work.

The point of the matter is to write a truthful and complete history which would be the history of the life and struggle of the people.

This is the fundamental question of Marxist-Leninist methods of historic research.

Following them, it is necessary to show vividly how millions of people lived and worked, in what they believed; how victories and failures, discoveries and errors, the glorious and the tragic, revolutionary enthusiasm of the masses and violations of socialist legality, and at times crimes, were combined.

This will be a scientific, materialistic view of history as a result of the activity of the masses.

This will mean a dialectic notion of history in which there is no room for lopsidedness, and history is viewed in all its diversity, complexity and contradiction, without excessive exaggeration of individual aspects.

The Marxist-Leninist approach to the analysis of the history of society presupposes persistent, intensive and critical thought. This requires time, talent and responsibility.

One can understand the impatience of the public wishing to take a look at the closed pages of our past sooner.

Nevertheless, this cannot justify hasty statements or a certain hurry in appraisals which can only lead to superficial conclusions that do not reflect all the complexity of the processes which took place.

It is impermissible when writings of the moment, which obscure rather than elucidate the truth, are offered to the broad public instead of genuine scientific research. This should be got rid of.

The central committee and the editorial offices of bodies of the mass media now receive many letters from people made anxious by the lopsided, subjectivist appraisals of our history that have appeared of late.

People write with strong emotion about the events of 50 years ago, as of today's problems. And this is not at all surprising.

These letters are about what is the main thing to us, the attitude to socialism and the notion of socialism. They want to know how it could happen that alongside the heroic achievements of the people crimes against them became possible.

What can be answered to this question, difficult for us all? Distinction should be made between essential manifestations of socialism and its deformations, between things that stem from objective reasons and those that are engendered by the subjective factor.

Deplorably, a substantiated research of our history from these positions was not carried through immediately after the 20th CPSU Congress.

Later it was sought to bypass these difficult questions. But there can be no vacuum in ideological life. So it was filled with either primitive myths or with alien ideology.

The main thing now is to create conditions for calm, objective work, to ensure coverage for that work which, on top of everything else, promotes active participation of the people in the discussion of questions of our history and, hence, their education and the shaping of their correct views on history.

Comrades, I would like to emphasise again that the recourse to our history is prompted not merely by interest in the past; it is vital-ly needed for our present work, for the solution of the problems of perestroika.

We have proclaimed the slogan: 'more socialism' and we must establish what values and principles should now be regarded as truly socialist.

Socialism has reached new historic milestones of renewal. Consequently everything — the practice and theory — is renewed.

Perestroika is also a result of our entire previous socio-economic and spiritual development and a special phase of 'negation of the negation', when we are getting rid of everything that is hindering us.

Perestroika, as regards its spiritual dimensions, is one of the decisive attempts to fully restore in the eyes of everyone the huge importance of socialist values, the main one of which is orientation to the working people.

It is necessary to remove the rust of bureaucratism from the values and ideals of socialism, to rid them of everything inhuman with which it had been attempted to replace them, to unfetter the best creative forces of man and ensure the spiritual flourishing of the personality.

Perestroika offers society ideas that are capable of really uniting people, not by arranging them in line as if for a parade, but on the basis of a variety of human potentials, aspirations, interests and capabilities.

Perestroika relies on the knowledge, intellect and experience of every man, on the best human qualities.

It opens the maximum opportunities for educating people by life, by the personal experience of participation in social transformations. It does not just open opportunities but demands that those opportunities be really used.

This is really the essence of perestroika. How are things now progressing in its main direction?

People are learning practical economy, are learning democracy and openness. And they are learning not passively but by actual participation in the mastering of new methods of economic management.

At party meetings, through debates and conflict of opinion in the mass media, and in their practical work, people come to realise the meaning of perestroika, what actions it requires of them in the concrete conditions in which they live and work.

Life itself constantly faces men with choice: what forms to choose in organising the work of a team, a shop, or the entire collective of an enterprise.

On what principle should work be remunerated? Who should be elected manager? Who should be entrusted with what? What principles should govern relations with partners?

What attitudes should be taken to new phenomena in public life, literature and art, or to old phenomena which are now viewed from unusual aspects?

Many such questions are posed every day.

The need to make a choice prompts activity, and encourages the independence of man and of his judgements and deeds.

Maybe there are still many controversial, extraneous things in this. But a sound basis, a fair solution of burning problems and a normal daily life in keeping with the principles of socialism will take care of this.

Democratisation, comrades, is the main thing. This is the decisive means of achieving the aims of perestroika.

Democratisation suits the very essence of the Leninist concept of socialism. It enables our society to reach the ideals for the sake of which the October Revolution was made.

There must be a clear understanding in the entire party that it is only through democratisation that the human factor can be activated in full measure in the profound transformation in all aspects of the life of society, and in the real processes of management and self-management.

It is only through democratisation and glasnost that deep-rooted apathy can be end-

ed and a strong impetus can be given to the social and political activity of the working people.

It is only through conscious and interested participation of the working people in all the affairs of society that the implementation of the humanistic aims of socialism is possible.

We realise profoundly now how much we have lost in the past when we failed to fully master — in theory, and much more so in practice — the entire fruitfulness of Lenin's ideas, intentions and practical recommendations related to Soviet socialist democracy.

This should be emphasised, comrades, for this day we meet those who feel the creeps when watching the scope of the processes of democratisation.

Some people have become nervous and warn us lest democracy should turn into chaos.

But look attentively at what they are worrying about. It is not at all about problems of crucial significance to society, but more likely about their own selfish interests. Of all people, this is an absolutely unacceptable posture for party members, especially leading ones.

Just as in everything else, the party should set an example of democratism. It is not for nothing that I tell you this.

We can see how much effort it requires to weed out one of the chronic, ingrained vices — the addiction of many party committees and their staffs to giving commands and their eagerness to dictate to everybody and decide everything for everyone.

Just look at what they are doing.

Some party bodies have taken such a fancy, for example, to radio conferences that they hold up to 40 of them every month, closing one at eleven o'clock at night and opening the next one at eight in the morning. And this goes on day after day.

That won't do at all. District-level functionaries comment with bitter irony that the only thing still lacking is a television hook-up with the regional party headquarters so that there they could see how erect the first secretary of the district committee is standing and how smart is his salute, if any.

There still are many attempts to squeeze glasnost and democracy into convenient limits, rein in the press, and act without reckoning with public opinion.

In one place they come down on a 'trouble-maker' having the nerve to revolt against torpor, bungled management, and wrong-doing, in another they infringe on collective farmers' rights, and in still another they turn a manager's election into a farce. In yet another, they ride roughshod over people's opinion and make decisions contradicting their vital interests and rights.

This is, no doubt, due to habit — developed by a significant part of our cadres over the years — of 'keeping everything under their thumb', acting the ultimate authority on every matter, and applying pressure to get things done.

They just don't recognise other methods, as a matter of fact. They are plain scared by the growing activity of the people.

But it should be realised full well that at the new phase of perestroika the party can only ensure its guiding role of the vanguard and lead the masses to effect far-reaching change if it uses democratic methods of work.

We have lost and keep losing a lot because

of our failure to unshackle completely grassroots initiative, endeavour and independence.

This is the biggest, the hardest, but also the most important task of perestroika. And it will not be an exaggeration to say that everything today hinges on its fulfilment.

Without initiative, without creative people, there can be no headway, let alone revolutionary change.

I tell you this because in practice one can often see a negative response to initiative and its rejection, and in many cases they don't even bother to get to the heart of the matter before making a deliberate effort to find pretexts to pull up the person who has suggested something new.

So far this is very widespread. We cannot tolerate this. Otherwise, perestroika won't get along. We should realise all this and encourage initiative in society in every way.

Today we have tens of thousands of innovators, daring, enterprising, resourceful people not afraid of the new. It is imperative that as early as tomorrow there should be hundreds of thousands and the day after tomorrow millions of them.

Socialism is a society of people with initiative. And socialism itself is the greatest initiative in history. Initiative is not a hindrance, not an inconvenience, not a short-lived campaign, but an indispensable, and the most important, condition for progress.

Party propaganda and the mass media have an immense role to play in promoting democratisation and glasnost.

Frankly speaking, comrades, we are still somewhat sparing, and frequently more than frugal, in evaluating the results of the great amount of work done by our numerous propagandists, lecturers, and ideological workers.

But it is by dint of their words that the ideas of the party, the ideas of renewal in society, are winning over the hearts and minds of the people.

Special responsibility lies today with the media.

I should say that our newspapers, sociopolitical and literary journals, television, radio, lectures, and public meetings with go-ahead workers, with the 'foremen of perestroika' have done and continue doing much to foster a new atmosphere, unswaddle thinking, excite an interest in every aspect of perestroika, and take stock of various ideas.

The press and television have been turning the spotlight of glasnost on those resisting and hampering perestroika, either consciously or because of thoughtlessness and incompetence.

The media have been supporting enthusiasts, diffusing their experience, and protecting from injustices those who have plunged headlong into working in the new manner, who are not afraid of making a mistake in a challenging job, who take risks and who have come to consider themselves personally responsible for perestroika picking up.

I have already had occasion to speak at conferences in the CPSU central committee of our positive attitude to this work by the mass media.

But it does not mean, of course, that there is no problem there. The media sometimes

lack the ability to show all the complexity and novelty of the tasks being tackled by the party and the people.

Every so often, journals and magazines slip up as they cannot resist the temptation of publishing a sensational story, making superficial judgements on current and past events, and showing elements of factionalism.

There are more, but clearly still too few, stories on the experience of perestroika in various worker collectives, cities, districts, regions and republics, and in central agencies.

The process under way is a complicated one and it has been going on with difficulty, in search of the right way. But we shall continue to advance the cause of perestroika resolutely and unwaveringly, analysing its problems and its positive results.

It is on this that the attention of the mass media should be fixed.

Comrades, the process of democratisation puts emphasis bluntly on the observance of laws in our society.

The legal nihilism against which Lenin battled so relentlessly has proved most widespread in conditions where command methods are at work.

This is because excessive centralism and administration by injunction, on the one hand, and parochialism on the other, don't go too well with legality.

They go instead for the mentality of 19th-Century Russian satirist Shchedrin's 'Governor' who had long contemplated a bill on "Non-confinement of governors to laws".

Perestroika is building a solid democratic wall in the way of such permissiveness and itch to command, and compelling all agencies and all officials to verify their actions according to the law. Many are not accustomed to doing this, but they will have to become so.

We should firmly pursue the line of reinforcing the legal levers of perestroika, first of all preventing the Law on State Enterprises and other legal instruments for economic reform from being diluted with all manner of departmental instructions and directives.

The policy of enhancing democratisation in society presupposes the consistent strengthening of socialist legality.

The power of the people is the complete and consummate triumph of laws that express their will.

This is why I would like to express strong support for the idea voiced at this plenum, of organising universal primary legal education as a single, comprehensive, nationwide programme covering all sections of the population and all our cadres at central and local levels.

In short, comrades, we are apparently not yet fully aware ourselves of how far-reaching the implications of the democratisation processes are, and of the full novelty of the approaches they open up to issues related to the activities of the party and the state, to the work of our cadres, and to the life and labour of all people and of the whole country.

The failure to recognise, or the underestimation of, the need to democratise socialist society decisively means nothing other than lack of faith in the people and in their commitment to socialism.

Revolutionary changes inevitably make a

deep imprint on issues of culture and the intellectual life of society.

It was gratifying to hear comrades speaking in debates yesterday and today discuss wide-ranging aspects of this matter in an interested manner.

Concern for raising the general cultural standards of the people was voiced very forcefully at this plenum. Speakers expressed it when mentioning the allocation of class-time among different school subjects, when stressing the need to improve the quality of secondary and higher education, and when talking about the requirements of modern technological progress.

They voiced it also when speaking about the role to be assumed now by literature, the arts and all artistic pursuits in general, when taking up the issue of culture in everyday life, and, finally, when discussing the tasks of party work.

This latter linkage is quite legitimate, since a courageous, fearless exposure to people and the readiness to discuss and solve any problems together with them is a sign of culture for an official of any rank.

Speakers at the plenum have said that without culture there can be no democracy. This is indeed so.

It is especially significant that the comrades linked the problem of culture with inter-ethnic relations and with educating the younger generation in a spirit of internationalism.

It was clearly realised even ahead of, in the prevision of, the Great October Revolution that without culture, and outside of culture, there would be no socialism.

The realisation of Lenin's cultural revolution programme has enabled our society to make unprecedented cultural progress and has become one of its more important prerequisites.

Now that we are grappling with the tasks of perestroika, renewal in socialist society and broad democratisation, the problems of culture appear in many ways in a new light.

Their new aspects are determined by our turning now to face man — his real self, potential and needs — for it is not by bread alone, not even by modern material goods, that man lives. It is mostly by truth and conscience, justice and freedom, morality and humanism that he lives.

The problems of culture are also being raised in a new manner by the present phase in the development of socialism: it is already clear today that its renovation is restoring the appeal of socialist values all over the world, and clearing them of the destructive consequences of stagnation, smug complacency and spiritual immobilisation.

They are also being posed in a new way by the present-day world — a world of contacts, interaction and exchanges of unheard-of intensity in the fields of science, culture and information, a world of sharp and day-to-day confrontation and rivalry, but also one of mutual enrichment with progressive values of universal significance.

The old truth has it that it is only on well-cultivated cultural soil that a new culture can come into being. Marxism itself originated on the high road of world culture. Bolshevism has absorbed the advanced humanist traditions of the great culture of Russia.

The richness and humanism of the 'old' culture — and we know how highly it was

valued by Vladimir Lenin — have made a major contribution to world civilisation. It is on it that the leaders of our revolution were brought up.

And we should now build up the cultural stratum of perestroika boldly and energetically, taking advantage of and developing all the cultural wealth created by our predecessors.

In other words, Lenin's call to enrich oneself with the "knowledge . . . of the culture created by the entire development of mankind" remains as topical as ever today. It reflects the real dialectics of class and universal human ideas under specific current conditions.

One of the chief lessons that we should learn from the past is as follows: if we now resolutely discard command-and-administer methods in the economy, such methods are totally unacceptable in the spiritual progress of society.

Democratism, confidence in people, tolerance toward the unusual, to pursuits, competence, benevolence, encouragement of initiative and innovation, support for talent — these are the key principles of party work in the field of culture, in the intellectual sphere of perestroika.

The party has firmly embarked upon a course towards a competent and far-sighted attitude — an attitude permeated with concern — to those processes under way in the spiritual sphere of our society which facilitate its purification and enrichment, and growth of its moral strength and creative potential.

The point at issue is not to let matters drift and allow phenomena incompatible with our ideology and morality. It is unacceptable to raise the question in this way.

The interests of the people, the interests of socialism, are the reference points of perestroika, including in the intellectual sphere.

It is necessary to resolve the tasks of restructuring in such a way as to fully stimulate people's initiative and independence, and to overcome their passivity, civic dullness, apathy and inability to think independently — the direct results of the bureaucratic style of management. One should see that forces of deceleration exist in the intellectual sphere too. They may be even stronger here than anywhere else.

Well, it is easier, more habitual for some to live by inertia. There are also those whose expectations are excessively high, who would like to effect change at one stroke.

There are no miracles, however. Our tasks are great and complicated. Perestroika is work, work and again work — persistent, courageous and every day. To realise this, to be filled with responsibility for the success of perestroika means to take a step forward in intellectual development as well. Soviet people, Soviet intellectuals understand this, confirming by deeds their response and support for the party's goals.

We see, we value the intelligentsia's contribution to perestroika, to accelerating scientific and technological progress, to the ideological-theoretical assessment of our times, to the development of the country's public consciousness, to the artistic reflection of the entire wealth of ideas, feelings, aspirations and thoughts of the Soviet people. I'm sure that we will read, see and hear works worthy of our stormy times.

The unique feature of our culture is that

it is multinational. We write about it often and habitually, but it seems we have not as yet fully learnt to value it. The ethnic groups in the USSR are tied by the community of historic destiny. It forms the basis of our brotherhood and kinship, which have withstood the most arduous trials. The source of our strength is in the free development of national cultures, enriched by the intellectual experience of fraternal peoples and all mankind.

True internationalism and true friendship of peoples are possible only if there is deep respect for the dignity, honour, culture, language and history of every people, and extensive relations among them.

We ought to facilitate in all ways the further broadening of contacts between national cultures, and their mutual enrichment, development and flourishing.

Soviet patriotism is the greatest of our values. Any manifestations of nationalism and chauvinism are incompatible with it.

Nationalism in any form is blind. Attempts at self-isolation lead only to a spiritual blind-alley. The knowledge and understanding of the scope, grandeur and human specifics of socialist revolution, the struggle of the party and the people, full of truth and heroic spirit, and the defence of the socialist motherland feed the roots of Soviet patriotism.

Here we approach a very important issue: the unification, through revolution and Soviet power, of the national honour and national heritage of every people and the internationalism of socialist society.

In short, we should set out to tackle the nationalities policy thoroughly at the present stage — in all areas, including theory and practice. This is the most fundamental, vital issue of our society. I think that one of the plenums of the central committee should be devoted to problems of the nationalities policy.

I would like to join the comrades who, addressing the plenum, spoke of the inadmissibility of flirting in matters of culture and ideology.

In the intellectual sphere as well, and maybe primarily in this sphere, we should be guided in our actions by our Marxist-Leninist principles.

Principles are what we, comrades, should never forgo in any circumstances. As Lenin put it, the most correct policy is a principled policy.

Comrades, the radical economic reform has confronted us with many new problems, including ideological ones, that require study and solution.

Today we can say that the economic reform is gaining broad scope and encompassing virtually all spheres of the national economy. The mastering of new methods of planning, self-financing, self-management and remuneration of work has begun on a mass scale. The organisational structures of management are readjusting as well.

The novelty of the situation in the economy is also in the growing scope of co-operatives and individual labour activity in various branches.

In fact, the forming of the socialist economy's co-operative sector is gaining scope on a new basis. All this also introduces substantial changes in the principles of management and economic activity, in the

organisation of the entire system of economic relations.

Now one can no longer rely on the state's 'charity'. One must count first of all on one's own resources, on the search for more effective economic decisions, on an extensive introduction of the achievements of scientific and technological progress, on the high qualification and competence of personnel and on the initiative of working people.

We are witnessing, comrades, how people's attitude to their work is changing. They are ever more clearly comprehending the cost of labour and material resources, and realising that high end results cannot be achieved without a frugal and effective utilisation of these resources.

People are beginning to understand that they will not cope with the new tasks if they retain their old approaches, their old attitude to the fulfilment of their duties.

True, we are only beginning to introduce cost-accounting and its system will be improved. But lying ahead are the switch to wholesale trade in means of production, the development of direct ties, co-production and the reform of the price-forming system. We will have to go through all this, master these novelties and consolidate them.

But the introduction of cost-accounting even in its present form has already generated and is generating a number of problems, encountering barriers and bringing to light various aspects of the braking mechanism, which has not yet been fully overcome.

It would seem that we have clarified the main questions of the reform, and worked out, discussed on a nationwide scale and adopted the Law on State Enterprises.

Now it is necessary to act, without permitting the slightest retreat from what is recorded in the law.

But so far we see in reality that both in the centre and on the local level there are frequent attempts to act in the old manner and to manage the economy by the old methods.

In the centre they still cling tenaciously to gross output indicators, the habit of issuing commands manifests itself through the placement of state orders, and attempts are being made to turn economic methods of management into veiled forms of commands.

There are instances when assignments are issued in violation of the Law on State Enterprises, without regard for the opinion of work collectives and without proper linkage with available resources and production capacities.

The unpreparedness of many for work in conditions of cost-accounting has manifested itself on the level of enterprises; the big possibilities and extensive rights so far are being used insufficiently, and many managers have adopted a wait-and-see attitude, counting on something happening, and are slow in joining the work to master the new methods of management.

Adherence to the old methods is so strong that, even when there is the possibility of a bigger profit by increasing the output of products that are needed and in demand, this is not done because preference is given to a calm life and not to a bigger income.

This may be explained by the fact that in a number of instances economic norms are inadequate. But the main explanation lies in

the existing psychology, in overcautiousness, and sometimes incompetence.

Of course, comrades, to a certain extent one can understand all these phenomena. After all the actual process of switching enterprises to cost-accounting has only begun.

This can be understood but apparently a timely warning should be given that if we do not overcome such attitudes, if we do not change radically the attitude to the new methods of management, we will not achieve what we want.

Numerous problems have been generated also by the development of the co-operative movement, individual labour activity, and the system of collective, family and other contracts.

Since not everything is proceeding smoothly in this big endeavour and there are instances of abuse, questions are being raised here and there about the correctness of using such forms of economic activity.

There are facts about attempts to artificially restrain this important socio-economic process.

What can be said about that? We must accumulate experience in a calm and business-like manner while cutting off speculative strivings and acting first of all by economic methods, methods of taxation, by way of glasnost.

There is one principle here, the socialist one — co-operative and personal incomes should be earned, and, as everywhere, determined by the quantity and quality of work.

Serious changes are also taking place in improving the organisational structures of management. These changes are quite ripe and necessary because they are directed at overcoming the heritage of the administrative-command methods of managing the economy. But here, too, the old approaches are not surrendering ground without a fight on regional, republic and national levels.

All this, comrades, generates a far from simple situation, fanning passions and clashes of views and, frankly, creating a certain strain both in production matters and in the ideological sphere.

Some fully accept the ongoing changes and advance confidently along the road of new methods of management and reliance on people's initiative and enterprise, and make their creative contribution to the reform.

Others seem reluctant to remain on the sidelines of the common advance, but reduce what they do — I am searching for words to put it more nicely — to the imitation of activity, limiting themselves to half-measures. And this cannot have any justification.

And of course one must take into account that there are people who are in essence against the reform, who sabotage the introduction of economic methods of management and try to discredit them in every way, using references to objective causes or even the opinion of working people as a cover.

What can be said in this connection? We have set the implementation of the radical economic reform as a paramount political task. The country's ascent to the pinnacles of social and economic progress depends on its success. There simply cannot be any retreat here. Besides, there is nowhere to

retreat to.

We all must act vigorously here, and with a sense of purpose. A situation in which we could get stuck midway, or somewhere in the beginning, should not be allowed. We must advance further. So proceeding from this, one should assess the positions of all agencies, party, state and economic cadres from the position of work collectives as well.

I would like to put this question on a bigger scale. For the economic reform is an inalienable part of transforming, renewing socialism as a social system, of imparting more modern and dynamic forms to it.

It should create the necessary preconditions and powerful stimuli for scientific and technological progress, for merging the possibilities of a planned economy with the personal interests, initiative and enterprise of people, for imparting to public property, methods of management and administration forms in which people would really feel that they are the true masters of production.

Scientific analysis and also practical experience have brought us to the firm conviction that all these tasks in their organic interconnection and unity can be successfully achieved by basing the operation of enterprises on the principles of cost-accounting, self-repayment, self-financing and self-management.

This is the road to harmonising the interests of society, the collective and the individual which guarantees the satisfaction of public requirements and at the same time ensures the interest of the working people themselves in the end results of production.

This is the road to uprooting the levelling and spongeing which have inflicted so much damage on us.

This is the road to the speediest solution of social problems, something that directly concerns both the individual and whole collectives, and promotes the strengthening of discipline and growth of efficiency.

This is a real economic foundation for deepening democracy and the participation of working people in management, for overcoming people's isolation from the economic process and its results.

The question of social justice has acquired still greater acuteness at the stage of extensive implementation of the economic reform.

This problem, it would seem, is clear enough — it is necessary to advance consistently along the road of strict observance of socialism's main principle: "from each according to his abilities, to each according to his work".

All this is so. But in practice, and there is no denying it, also in our perceptions, we have far from rid ourselves of the levelling psychology.

It is common knowledge that even now many people get their pay only for reporting for work, and hold positions without due account for their actual labour contribution. And the most surprising thing is that this hardly worries anyone.

But, no sooner have people in pay-your-own-way collectives got pay rises through better final results, than protests and irritated voices have come to be heard, complaining that those people are allegedly earning too much.

Under socialism, however, the question

can only be whether the wages have been earned or not, rather than whether they are high or low. It is another matter that the way of judging the amount and quality of work should be based on scientifically substantiated yardsticks tried out in practice.

In short, comrades, we should get down to the problem of eradicating levelling tendencies, in earnest. This is a highly important social, economic and ideological issue.

To all intents and purposes, levelling has a ruinous impact not only on the economy, but also on people's morality and on their entire way of thinking and behaving. It detracts from the prestige of conscientious and imaginative work, loosens discipline, smothers the motivation to upgrade skills, and delivers a blow to competition at work.

We should say bluntly that levelling is a reflection of petty bourgeois views which have nothing to do with Marxism-Leninism, with scientific socialism.

And we shall not make progress, shall not be able to cope with the tasks of perestroika, if we don't scrub the levelling attitudes out wherever they still persist.

Yes, socialism is a society of social guarantees, which does not leave a person on his own to deal with the difficulties of life and adversities.

The social protection of the Soviet people rests on the abolition of private ownership and exploitation and on the power of the working people. The principle of social protection is sealed in our laws and has been confirmed by the practical activities of many years.

The most important social guarantees created in the country include the right to housing, job security, and free education and medical assistance.

Even with all the drawbacks and flaws there, the fundamental significance of these gains is indubitable.

But the extent of social protection in society depends on the amount of national wealth which, for its part, depends on how correctly and consistently we apply socialism's principle "from each according to his abilities, to each according to his work".

In keeping with this principle, a person's living standard is directly dependent on his using his aptitudes and talents, on his contribution to the common effort. This forms the basis of socialism's viability.

It depends precisely on the talent and concrete contribution made by every working person to the country's public wealth. At the same time we must resolutely cut short any money-grubbing inclinations wherever they manifest themselves. It is only honest and conscientious work within the framework of our laws and existing norms that can be highly rewarded materially and receive public acclaim.

Comrades, we have big plans for economic development. They are known to you. But while devoting all our energies to unfolding that work on a large scale, we shall not lose touch with the everyday needs and requirements of the people.

I will recall that we started perestroika under the pressure of urgent, vital problems. On more than one occasion I had to return

to the appraisal of the situation which had emerged in our country by the early '80s. I would like to add to that some considerations.

As is known, the economic development rates were declining in our country, to reach a critical point. But even those rates, as has become clear now, were achieved in considerable measure on an unhealthy basis, due to temporary factors. I am referring to trade in oil in the world market at the high prices which had formed then, and the totally unjustified intensification of the sale of alcoholic beverages.

If we look at the economic indicators of growth separately from these factors, we will see that during four five-year plan periods we had no increase in the absolute growth of the national income; it even started to decline in the early '80s. This is the real picture, comrades.

Only now is economic growth on a healthy basis beginning.

We continue to experience, very much, the consequences of the situation shaped in the past. Now that the situation in the world market has changed and the prices of fuel and energy resources have declined, now that we are forced to reduce the production and sale of wines and vodka in the name of preserving the population's social health, the country's economy is confronted with a most serious financial problem.

Over the past three years public revenues declined by more than 37,000 million roubles, as a result of the reduced sale of alcoholic beverages.

On top of that, revenues from the sale of imported products, whose purchases we were forced to limit because of a shortage of foreign currency, declined by 9,000 million roubles in 1987 as compared with 1985.

The existing situation demands from us immense, I would say, extraordinary efforts in two directions simultaneously: in implementing radical economic reform and in improving the current economic situation and meeting the vital needs of our population.

At the June plenary meeting of the central committee, as you remember, we singled out top-priority problems — food, housing and provision of the population with necessary goods and services.

How are our decisions backed by practical deeds in the country, republics, territories and regions? The party, the people, should know this, comrades.

Firstly, about the food situation. Gross grain output increased by 17 percent in two years of the 12th Five-Year-Plan period.

Meat production increased compared with the mean yearly production in the 11th Five-Year Period by 2.1 million tons, or 13 percent; milk by 8.2 million tons, or nine percent; eggs by seven billion, or 9.4 percent. There is growth, as you see. It resulted in certain improvement in food supply.

And this was despite cuts in the import of these foodstuffs due to reduced currency revenues.

Nonetheless, the situation with food resources does not satisfy us, and we should persistently build them up. There are great reserves here, but they are used in different ways.

On the one hand, there are a number of republics and regions which have noticeably increased agricultural output in the recent years.

Agriculture in the Oryol Region, for instance, was seriously lagging behind in its development quite recently. Changes for the better have been taking place there lately.

The region's farms paid much attention to using effective forms of organisation of work and remuneration. Practically all plant-breeding has been covered by various forms of contract — collective, family or individual, and contracts of lease. Transition to contract principles of work is nearing completion in livestock farming as well.

More attention than before has been given to the social development of the countryside. An average of 50-100 flats, 40 new places at schools and 43 places at child-care centres were commissioned in each of the region's backward farms last year.

All that brought about improvement in the availability of personnel in the countryside, and created conditions for enhancing the productivity of farming and livestock breeding.

As a result, gross agricultural production in 1986 and 1987 grew by 18 percent and labour productivity by 27 percent as compared with average annual levels in the previous five-year plan period.

Thanks to above-plan production, meat sales for the local population in the past two years increased by 33 percent and those of dairy products by 17 percent. The people thus felt real benefits from perestroika.

Regrettably, it is not everywhere that work is conducted in this way. In Armenia and in the Novosibirsk, Voronezh, Yaroslavl, Kirovograd, Kostroma and Rostov regions productivity and efficiency in crop and livestock farming remains low. Because of shortfalls in dairy farming there, they didn't even meet the planned targets for milk supplies for sale to the local population.

The same happened with meat supplies in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Uzbekistan, the Chechen Ingush Autonomous Republic and the Odessa and Chardzhou regions.

For the situation to change, it is essential decisively to overcome parasitic attitudes and the striving of many local officials to solve food supply issues by sending more and more requests to central authorities.

What is most important here?

It is time to stop issuing orders and commands to collective farms and state farms. It is important to open a broad vista for imaginative and enterprising activity by workers in the agrarian sector, to make vigorous use of all effective forms of the organisation and remuneration of work: collective, lease and family contracts within collective farms and state farms, and also new approaches within the framework of district agro-industrial amalgamations.

Concerning housing construction and some questions of developing the social sphere: as you know, measures to ensure an accelerated solution of the tasks we face here have been adopted and are being implemented.

The first results of this work are these: counting all sources of finance, about 130

million square metres of housing were built in 1987, or almost 2.5 million square metres of floor living space more than planned, and 10 million square metres more than in 1986. This is more than in any previous year.

During the past year the construction of general educational schools went up by 18 percent, childcare centres by 7 percent, vocational schools by 61 percent, outpatient clinics by 17 percent and clubs and houses of culture by 36 percent.

I have already had occasion to speak about the search for an discovery of new ideas in housing construction in Kazakhstan. Construction workers in Kazakhstan worked well last year and fulfilled their programme for the year by the 70th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution.

As a result apartments were given to 20 percent of the families queueing for housing.

Such successes make attainable the fulfilment of the new objective — of providing by 1991 housing for all the working people of the republic who had been put on the waiting lists before the beginning of 1987.

Many-sided work for developing the social sphere is under way in Estonia. Plans are fulfilled there steadily from year to year; the country's highest ratio of housing per capita of the population has been achieved there, this due in no small measure to efficient use of the population's resources.

Another important objective — of providing each farm with a well-built and modern school, a childcare centre, club and canteen — is being resolved on a planned basis. We would like to stress specially that the successes of the Estonian builders are based on the priority development of the republic's own material and technical base.

As you remember, the leaders of many republics and regions were criticised at the June plenary meeting of the central committee, for the lag in housing construction. Such lags happen to this day.

The construction of housing and social facilities is proceeding at a slow pace in Tajikistan, in a number of regions of the Russian Federation, especially in the Gorky, Volgograd, Novosibirsk, Penza, Ryazan and Chita regions, and in Daghestan.

What is happening? What are the main causes of the lag?

Bearing in mind that the initial conditions of all are practically the same, an answer to that question should be looked for in the first place in the relapses of the old disease - the discrepancy between word and deed.

Quite good programmes are drawn up everywhere, but it is far from everywhere that their implementation is backed up with the necessary organisational and economic work.

The other day the political bureau of the CPSU central committee examined and approved the decision of the CPSU central committee and the USSR Council of Ministers on the development of individual housing construction in the cities and in the countryside. The measures outlined eliminate unjustified restrictions and create favourable conditions for crediting and building such housing. All that is to be very helpful in the implementation of our social programmes. The point is that the local bodies should

devote proper attention to individuals building houses for themselves and give them the necessary assistance.

In general, comrades, as you see, all-round measures are taken and it is necessary to use them more actively to resolve the housing problem more speedily and create better living conditions for the Soviet people.

Comrades, let us be uncompromising in evaluations: failure to fulfil plans of housing and socio-cultural construction is unforgivable and cannot have any justification. Facts of failure to fulfil assignments should be made public everywhere, and those guilty of frustrating the important social programme should bear responsibility before the working people.

The situation as regards producing goods and providing services to the population gives rise to serious concern. The measures taken to accelerate the production of consumer goods are yielding certain results. The output of manufactured goods for the population increased during the past two years by 16.5 billion roubles, or by 9.4 percent, including the growth of output by the light industry by 3.3 billion roubles, or 4 percent.

Yet the situation on the consumer market remains tense and the population's solvent demand is not being satisfied.

Last year industry manufactured 3.6 billion roubles less in commodities for the population than stipulated by plan. All-Union ministries account for a considerable part of this shortfall, especially as regards articles of a modern technical level that are in particular consumer demand.

In practical terms there have been no tangible changes for the better in the quality of consumer goods. The material and technical facilities for expanding services to the population are being built up particularly slowly.

While not absolving branch ministries of responsibility, the restructuring of the national economy's management ultimately shifts precisely to the republics, territories and regions the centre of gravity of practical work to satisfy the requirements of people in goods and services, and to ensure balance between the population's cash incomes and spending.

Attempts under all sorts of pretexts to withdraw from participation in the solution of these vitally important problems should be critically evaluated.

Evidently we should also ponder the following question: how perfect is our economic mechanism of stimulating work collectives and industries to increase the output of consumer goods? The more so that attempts to solve the problem of the quantity and quality of goods and services solely by administrative methods have had little effect to date.

We should not fear admitting our mistakes here. On the contrary, the quicker they are detected and corrected, the quicker will be the payback.

Only one demand must remain unchanged: problems should be resolved quickly, without procrastination.

Some may ask on hearing this part of the speech: what does it have to do with

ideological aspects of perestroika?

I think that the relationship here is direct. The way these problems will be handled will largely determine the mood and mentality of our people, their feelings, attitude to the effort, to the party's policy and to perestroika.

Comrades, our economic reform, the development of the processes of democratisation and glasnost, invigoration of the moral and spiritual sphere, everything that we associate with the notion of revolutionary perestroika, are links of the same chain.

They are closely inter-related and interdependent. They demand that, having started restructuring in one of them, we follow it in another.

It is therefore quite natural, I would say, logical that we have come to the need to overhaul our political system.

The point at issue is not, of course, replacing the existing system, but introducing qualitatively new structures and elements and imparting to it new content and dynamism which would secure the successful development of our society.

These issues are already being widely and actively discussed in the country. And this is not accidental. Perestroika is moving deeper. It must cover all spheres, including, of course, such a key sphere as society's political system.

As I have already said, we should carry out thorough work on these issues well before the 19th Party Conference.

The main problem in developing our political system is to create a mechanism of power and government with precisely regulated effective democratic control and corresponding legal procedures which would drastically diminish and even reduce to nought the element of chance in handling major political and state issues and preclude the possibility of subjectivity at all levels of our political system.

It is necessary that decisions of principled importance be worked out and adopted with the people's active participation. This will correspond to our socialist democracy.

Priority should be given to fundamentally changing the role of the soviets (governing councils) as the core of the political system of our society and its embodiment in state bodies.

It is in the way the soviets are formed and function that the democratic principles of socialism must be realised in the first place.

In a sense, we are talking today about the need to revive the soviet system of government in Lenin's interpretation. We should make the soviets at all levels agencies of state authority and administration that will be really working, demonstrating initiative and enjoying full rights.

This will evidently make it necessary to take a better look at how the soviets should be formed. This means upgrading our election system so that the process of forming the bodies of power will make for active involvement by the people and for a careful selection of persons capable of ensuring the soviets' activities with regard for the goals of perestroika.

We should take account in the soviets of

the entire diversity of our country, including national features.

And, of course, we should not bypass the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. We are to re-think its role so as to increase the effectiveness of its activities, starting from the Presidium and full-scale parliamentary sessions and ending with the work of the commissions and individual deputies.

The key issue of reform in the political system concerns delimiting the functions of party and state bodies. Lenin's ideas should be used as the guidelines there as well.

The party's directing and guiding role is an indispensable condition for the functioning and developing of socialist society. The party theoretically formulates and adjusts the policy line.

It carries its policy into the masses, organising and rallying them to perform the tasks set, and executes a relevant personnel policy.

These are, basically, the party's principal functions as the political vanguard of society.

Today, in conditions of perestroika and democratisation, Lenin's teaching about the party and its activities under socialism should be revived in full. We should come to the national party conference with well-considered, collectively-elaborated proposals on these issues.

The political system being created cannot be imagined also without a developed system of social organisations and without fundamental changes to the content and methods of their work.

It should be based on realisation of the fact that standing behind each public organisation are definite social strata with their specificities and interests.

And the task is not to level them but, on the contrary, to bring them out as fully as possible, take them into consideration and place them at the service of social progress.

It is the prime task of public organisations to promote socio-political activity, satisfy diverse interests and develop in citizens skills of social self-administration.

I believe we must set forth as a task the overcoming in public organisations of the sway held by salaried functionaries, excessive organisation and red tape by way of handing over a part of the powers of central bodies to grassroots-level ones. The latter should be freed of the need to have every step they take okayed by higher executives.

A need is felt for developing the system of social structures, for setting up a number of formations uniting people by their various social, professional and other interests. Probably it would be good to expand the range of questions which state bodies can solve only with the participation of public organisations.

Socialist democratism means diversity of forms of social and political life, naturally on the basis of our socialist principles and values. And this idea should be incorporated in the decisions which, we believe, the party conference is called upon to work out.

This applies also to questions of relations between nationalities and the development of national statehood. Today we speak about the growth of the national awareness of all

the nations and peoples of our country, about manifestations of national feelings (the manifestation sometimes being in a deformed way). All these are topical questions and they have to be solved.

We will also have to think about the forms of further developing ties between republics, strengthening their rights, including their representation in the central state bodies.

As you see, numerous problems have accumulated. And half-measures will not do. Evidently we face the task of preparing, for the forthcoming party conference, detailed proposals on perfecting the political system based on the ideas of the 27th Party Congress and plenary meetings of the central committee on socialist self-government of the people and taking into account the ongoing processes of democratisation in society.

Now, comrades, I will touch upon some international aspects of the ideology of perestroika.

Having, emotionally, let the experience and lessons of the past through our minds and souls, we have set ourselves the task of understanding, studying and sorting out things as regards the society in which we live. In exactly the same way we have posed the question in international terms: to understand, sort out things and study the surrounding world in which our country lives.

As a result of an objective analysis we have come to the need for perestroika and new political thinking. Thus a breakthrough has been made in the scientific cognition of the present-day realities which can be transformed into an innovatory and dynamic policy.

Even before the party congress, we proclaimed in the Statement of January 15, 1986 a programme for advancement to peace without nuclear weapons as an indispensable condition for humanity's survival. The 27th Congress of the CPSU has given a detailed interpretation of the philosophy of peaceful coexistence at the turn of the two centuries and founded the concept of a comprehensive system of peace and international security.

Our initiatives in the field of disarmament and other specific steps in the international arena are now no longer an improvisation, not just a reaction to some or other political moves and actions of the West, as happened in the past. They have been placed on a solid and durable scientific basis.

Thus the road was paved to Geneva, then to Reykjavik and at last to Washington for the signing with the United States, at the highest level, of the first agreement on a cut in nuclear weapons — the Treaty on Intermediate- and Shorter-Range Missiles. I believe that in evaluating its significance, we all agree that it will in action prove the correctness of the policy which was started by the April plenary meeting of 1985 and was theoretically and politically substantiated at the 27th Congress.

We say that the Treaty signed in Washington is the start of real disarmament. We wish it to be so and we will work so that it shall have a follow-up.

But this is also a result of the efforts in the fight against the nuclear threat waged by the socialist countries, the other progressive and peaceable states, mass public movements, the United Nations Organisation

and the Non-Aligned Movement. A result of the vigour of the prominent scientists, workers in culture, and churchmen, their consolidation and mutual understanding. This is a consequence of the sensible and active stand of many politicians, representatives of the business world and military circles.

The Treaty is some kind of indicator of the level which the potential of peace has reached. It is also evidence that new thinking not only grips the minds, but has already begun influencing world politics.

The drawing up of the Treaty is also instructive as regards the experience accumulated. The fruitfulness of equal talks, even if they are difficult ones, in which mutual interests and concerns are scrupulously taken into account, has been proved.

But the signing of the Treaty is no cause for complacency. It can be said to have opened a new stage in the fight for disarmament and peace, including the ideological fight.

Yet very soon after the first days of euphoria the opponents of normalising relations with the USSR started 'sounding the assembly', mobilising their forces for struggle against the ratification of the Treaty.

The US Administration is as good as its word in upholding the Treaty. Yet it simultaneously echoes the ultra-rightists in their anti-Soviet, anti-communist rhetoric. And not only in words, but also through certain actions in the militaristic style under the same pretext of a 'growing Soviet threat'. We again witnessed provocations on our borders. The atmosphere which formed during the visit to the USA clearly goes against the grain with some people.

The militaristic activities in the European part of Nato have been noticeably invigorated. They are in a hurry to arrange for 'compensation' for the missiles to be eliminated under the Treaty. They are planning a modernisation and build-up of 'other' types of nuclear weapons, especially at sea and in the air, cynically claiming that the latter are not covered by the Treaty.

We have again heard a flat 'No' from London, Paris and the Nato headquarters in Brussels to renunciation of nuclear weapons, even in the distant future.

The statements in approval of the Treaty and the Soviet-American talks on a cut in strategic weapons are accompanied by statements that France and Britain by no means intend to end the build-up of nuclear weapons. Quite the other way round. It is precisely after the signing of the Treaty that the Nato states demonstrate enhanced activity in the field of bilateral and multilateral military integration.

Positive pronouncements made by high-ranking figures about our perestroika again alternate with talk about 'communist expansion' and warnings that one should not forget 'who one is dealing with', and that since the present Soviet leadership is not going to change its system, its 'diplomacy of smiles' arouses suspicion.

They are again insisting on the senselessness of any talks with the USSR, since, they claim, it does not deserve trust at all. Consolidation of reactionary, extreme, anti-Soviet forces is under way.

All sorts of 'analysts' and Kremlinologists make frightening recommendations to their

governments, confuse the public, and intimidate it with 'catastrophic consequences' for the West if the disarmament process is carried on.

Attempts have been stepped up to bring the ideological struggle over the questions of perestroika and disarmament into our territory, into our midst.

'Radio voices' are spreading provocative inventions about a growth of struggle in Soviet society and in the Soviet leadership, that an 'opposition' to perestroika and the CPSU's foreign policy has already emerged and is growing.

They wish to sow uncertainty and disbelief in the possibility of achieving the aims set by the party. These centres of anti-socialist provocation are engaged in such activities not only vis-a-vis the Soviet Union — we see this very well.

They are hastily developing new methods of subversive activities against the other socialist countries, where dynamic processes of further improving socialism are also under way. They are trying to find specific methods for each of them so as to be able to act, so to say, with due regard for the national specificities.

We know why they began to worry. Not only because disarmament is a threat to the profits of the military-industrial complex and the profits of those who live well by it. But also because they are afraid of a revival of the attractive force of socialist ideas, a growth of the prestige of socialism as a society of the working people. They are scared because good feelings for our country are again growing, a new 'discovery' of the Soviet Union is taking place.

All that undermines the 'enemy image' and hence the ideological fundamentals of anti-Soviet and imperialist policy. What served the reactionaries so well in the past decades is now falling to pieces. Hence the 'rightists' are unhappy about the USSR's policy of initiative and peace. That is why they would wish to stop the disarmament train, which is picking up speed.

We should see that in our ideological work and propaganda and take appropriate measures.

Comrades, during the period after the preceding plenary meeting of the central committee another significant international event, along with the INF Treaty, was the steps towards a settlement of the Afghanistan problem. It has long had a concerned direct and deep impact on the feelings of Soviet people, our entire society.

After the April plenary meeting of the CPSU central committee (1985) the political bureau made an exacting, straightforward analysis of the situation and started looking for a way out of it. Yet it has proved to be no simple matter to practically resolve all the problems making it possible to untie the main knots of that most involved regional conflict.

The possibilities for that opened after truly national forces, with Najibullah at their head, appeared on the political front-stage in Afghanistan late in 1986. External prerequisites for the settlement of the conflict have also taken shape in such a way that Afghanistan be an independent, neutral and non-aligned state. This accords with the interests of the Afghan people. This also accords with our state interests.

You know well the statement which was

issued ten days ago. It says, properly speaking, everything about how we will act and what we hope for. It has been met with understanding and approval by our people, our allies and friends and by broad sections of the world public.

It confronts with new realities those who further intend to exploit the Afghan problem to their selfish ends. And they will have to reckon with these realities. The months to come will show the true stand of all the participants in the political settlement of the situation in Afghanistan.

Certainly, comrades, our participation in the Afghan conflict is a very complex problem concerning many aspects of what we are overcoming in the course of perestroika and consistent translation of new thinking into a practical policy.

Yet the main thing now is that the political bureau is acting on that issue as well, in strict conformity with the principled line of the 27th CPSU Congress.

It must be said in general that the scientific elaboration of the problems pertaining to new thinking and their ideological substantiation as well are at the initial stage.

There will not be less work here in the conditions of broadening glasnost. It is a natural desire of the Soviet people to look into everything by themselves, to have a better understanding of developments, the more so to participate with skill in the nationwide campaign against the threat of war, in international relations.

That is precisely why all necessary conditions are being created in order to raise the information and intellectual level of foreign-policy propaganda, explanation and analysis of international issues.

This is a very important part of our ideological activity. Just as with regard to our ideas and changes of the domestic order, there is confusion in the minds of some people with regard to the essence of new thinking.

This is not surprising: problems are too considerable and they will mount, and struggle has been started around them.

We are witnessing and are taking part in an unprecedented phenomenon, a kind of paradox created by the great dialectics of world history.

The intensive internationalisation of many processes on the world scale is being accompanied by the multiplication of the number and diversity of options for the national and regional development of countries and peoples. Both contribute to the consolidation of the integrity of the world.

Such things are yet to be seriously studied in theory and translated into practice. This is a task, both theoretical and practical, that has many offshoots.

We counterposed the concept of the 'balance of interests' and reciprocal, equal security to the militarist doctrine on which power politics is based.

Our state interests do not contradict the interests of nations, of working people in any other society.

Without preserving peace, there will be no progress at all, and it is senseless to speak about anyone's interests outside the context of resolving this task.

The struggle to preclude war from international politics is a struggle to save millions of lives, above all working people who are the first and hardest hit by any wars.

Establishing normal business relations with states of the opposing system shakes, in addition to other things, anti-Sovietism and, therefore, anti-communism, thus weakening reaction's pressure on democratic gains and aspirations.

Wiping out militarism — the issue which we have raised sharply and which we approach in a businesslike, realistic way — not only helps restrain the most reactionary forces, but also promises more jobs everywhere.

In addition to direct benefits for working people, this will result in the expansion of the economically and socially active section of the working mass, that is the social base of democracy and progress.

The effort to build a new world economic order and overcome the glaring crisis phenomena in the Third World ultimately means the creation of conditions worthy of human beings for more millions of people of whole continents, and their involvement in making history. This is also a major factor of world progress, independent development and revolutionary change.

The complexity of world processes and the unpredictability of twists and turns in world politics, the scope and extraordinary nature of our peace offensive which has evoked an unprecedented international response, resistance of formidable forces which are objectively not interested in peaceful co-existence, and, finally, the need to be understood correctly — all this raises substantially not only our political, but also our theoretical responsibility.

The vital theoretical issue now facing the Marxists and their opponents is the question of combining class and universal human principles in real world development and, consequently, in politics.

The report on the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution set out principled provisions on this account.

A fundamental problem has been advanced: whether it is possible at the present stage, with the level of interdependence and integrity in the world attained by the turn of the 20th century, to exert influence on the nature of imperialism so as to block the most dangerous of its manifestations.

Criteria have been defined for competition of various social systems and the possibility of their existence in forms that will preclude universal catastrophe.

Our thought pertaining to social science has become bolder in starting to analyse the peculiarities and main features of the new epoch.

Large sections of world public opinion regard our perestroika as a benefit for all mankind and view positively, even benevolently, the transformation we have started and our foreign policy, many openly and energetically support it.

We have revived throughout the world the hope for the future. This is a great moral asset.

We ought to treasure that, and to justify the trust that we feel everywhere.

This is one aspect of the matter directly linked to the human factor with roots running into objective processes of our time.

Another aspect is the essential change that occurred in monopoly capital and in the society where it dominates.

Besides, there have emerged absolutely new factors that have acquired decisive

significance for present-day world development: the threat of nuclear war, unprecedented social and international consequences of the scientific and technological revolution, the universal ecological threat and a fundamentally new situation in the sphere of information and all types of communications.

The exacerbation of global problems and the realisation of the need for international co-operation in handling them work for the benefit of peace and disarmament.

Consequences of the horrible experience of fascism and the Second World War are having a lasting psychological effect on people in many countries.

All that alters the correlation between the 'party of war' and the 'party of peace' within the framework of monopoly capitalism and its international-political superstructure, between, in Lenin's words, the "crude bourgeois, aggressive-bourgeois, reactionary-bourgeois camp" and the "pacifist camp" of the class dominating in the West.

In brief, the international conditions under which we have started a new, major phase of our revolution differ essentially from those that existed during its previous stages.

New thinking means correct understanding of new realities subjected to analysis using the method of materialistic dialectics. It also means conclusions drawn from such a study and checked against revolutionary Leninist experience and basic principles of Marxism-Leninism.

I must stress: new thinking rests on the Leninist theory of imperialism, on Lenin's study of the nature of imperialism that will never become 'good'. It recognises no laws of morality, and it will never obey them. On this issue, we neither had nor have any illusions.

The centrepiece of new thinking is the new role of universally shared values. Their significance was stressed both by Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin. And these were not just common considerations stemming from the humanistic nature of their teachings. Emphasising the significance of the processes of internationalisation in the world, our great teachers revealed the objective basis of universally shared values, combining them dialectically with the socio-class ones. Now all this is becoming the pivot of practical policy.

This requirement on policy is determined by both the negative and the positive processes of the times — on the one hand, by the mounting unprecedented dangers to the very existence of the human race and, on the other, by the growing role of the masses and the general democratic factor in domestic and world politics.

This calls for fundamentally different international relations as well.

What kind of relations, precisely? What principle should be the underlying and indispensable one?

We have named it. We have declared it for all to hear and keep repeating it to everyone — from the U.S. President to our friends struggling for national independence and for socialism.

This principle is one of recognising that every people and every country have the freedom of social and political choice.

There is not a shade of utopia or illusion about it. We are perfectly aware that it is not by diplomatic courtesies and not by

propaganda that the West can be convinced of the need to recognise this principle.

There should, of course, be no belittling whatsoever of the significance of our goodwill, the new style of our international activities, our desire for candid and productive dialogue in the name of achieving a minimum of trust that is possible between representatives of the opposite social systems, our genuine renunciation of ideologising state-to-state relations, and readiness for equal give-and-take without damaging the security of anyone — in short, everything that is characteristic of Soviet foreign policy at the time of perestroika.

But the main and ever more persuasive "enlightener" on the need to recognise the right of nations to live as they choose, without outside interference, are the very realities of the modern world mentioned above and reflected in the new thinking.

It is, incidentally, precisely because it is an accurate reflection of the world that we think it useful not only for ourselves, but also for the rest of the world.

These realities compel everyone without exception to reckon with them because the ultimate stake is the survival of humanity and the very existence of civilisation.

The most important, I would say historic, mission of the forces of socialism, democracy and progress consists precisely in augmenting and strengthening, and even creating, the new realities which will erect an insurmountable barrier to the forces of aggression and intervention.

We, the Soviet Union, are creating and consolidating these realities through our perestroika. I would like to repeat that all our foreign policy accomplishments and the very cause of preserving peace are rooted here, in the success of perestroika, in our work, comrades.

But it is important that all our people realise full well also that conversely, a successful perestroika is impossible without a foreign policy based on new thinking.

Comrades, it is in this dialectic inter-relationship of internal and external political aspects that the ideological problems of perestroika come to face us at the new phase.

Once again, but ten times as forcefully, they are calling our attention to a matter raised so emphatically at the Central Committee's January plenum a year ago — the personnel issue.

In our vibrant and dynamic organising, political and ideological work which is currently being vigorously restyled, there must be no place for people like Shchedrin's character who used to say: "I don't understand the new ideas. I don't understand even why I should understand them."

It's only too bad when a contemporary of ours also thinks in the same vein. But it is even worse when this frame of mind is shared by a Party member, especially a leading one.

Let me stress again and again that an example of democratisation should be set by the Party and every communist, in whatever post. Without this, the process of democratisation won't get along.

The Party has begun perestroika with itself, with its cadre corps.

After the January plenum much has been accomplished in the Party's work with

personnel. The main criterion guiding us has been the attitude to perestroika.

The just-completed accounts by elected bodies in all Party organisations of their guidance over perestroika efforts have demonstrated that the majority of the communists do not want to put up with inactivity, irresponsibility, inertia and indifference to perestroika and do not tolerate phrase-mongers and windbags.

The communists at these meetings have rated the performance of more than 4,800 Party committees and Party bureaus unsatisfactory and replaced over 89,000 members of elected bodies.

This is a natural result of the atmosphere created in the Party, in which the cadre are more strictly accountable for the progress of perestroika.

We should consistently advance along this path and this means tirelessly learning democratism, as demanded by the time of perestroika.

Learning democracy is hard. But we have dependable guideposts, a dependable Leninist method for such studies.

It includes fearlessly promoting criticism and self-criticism.

It includes a constant desire to be in the midst of the masses, in the midst of the most burning problems of life.

It includes taking stock of the sentiments, requirements and vital interests of working people and all sections of society.

It includes, finally, daily affirming the Leninist, business-like style of work, whose main feature is reliance on the masses.

And, of course, democratisation should permeate all intra-Party affairs — through an increased role for elected bodies and a dramatically enhanced fighting spirit to be acquired by primary Party organisations.

We are bound to remember that the guiding role of our Party has not been given to it by someone higher up once and for all, but has been won by several generations of communists and their selfless struggle for socialism and the interests of working people.

And now, daily and hourly, we should reaffirm and assert our right to be in the vanguard of the revolutionary renewal of society, and do this by hard work in the name of the people, in the name of the fatherland.

In conclusion, comrades, I would like to note that quite a lot has already been done, if we compare our life today with what we had before perestroika was launched nearly three years ago.

But yet too little has been done, if we compare it with what we expect from perestroika and what our society is capable of.

Many tough problems will have to be solved on the way to a drastically new situation in Soviet society.

We are approaching the 19th national Party Conference.

We are to make an in-depth analysis of the basic results of the past three years of living and working in conditions of perestroika, especially of the first months that the Law on the State Enterprise has been in effect.

We are to determine where our Party and society have found themselves and are heading since launching the processes

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Yegor Ligachev's speech at CPSU Central Committee plenum

YEGOR LIGACHEV, Member of the Politburo and Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee gave a report at the CPSU Central Committee plenum last Wednesday on progress in the secondary and higher school reform and the Party's tasks in effecting it.

Recalling that the students at the country's secondary-schools and colleges number 57 million, he said the nation's future and the very destiny of socialism turn to a decisive degree on the general education and vocational training standards of the present and future generations.

Using the Russian word for the restructuring drive under way in the Soviet Union, Ligachev said "perestroika covers the school as well".

"There is a clear awareness in the leading bodies, among the Party activists and among broad sections of the public that without achieving serious change in the educational system and without turning the attention of the entire society to urgent problems in this field, we shall not be able to attain a fast speed in our constructive endeavours and make steep progress."

This is why the issue — one of the more important aspects of drastic improvement in Soviet socialist society — has been put on the agenda of this plenum. Ligachev explained.

"The Soviet school has covered a long and difficult, but very rewarding path," he continued.

"Over the years of Soviet Government, educational institutions have trained some 70 million workers, over 35 million specialists with secondary education qualifications and more than 22 million with higher education.

"A new, socialist intelligentsia and its national detachments have been forged. And secondary education qualifications are becoming the norm."

While pointing to some positive results of the first phase of Soviet education reform, which has now been completed, Ligachev said also that the pace and reach of the planned measures have not been satisfactory.

"This applies to pivotal matters — the content of education and the methods of instruction and upbringing," he emphasised.

"The general education and vocational school reform has run into the greatest difficulties. Drafted before April 1985, the school reform has been an attempt at change in just one social

field — education. Looking from the vantage-point of the experience gained of restructuring in the country, one can clearly see the inadequacy of the planned measures and a desire to realise them by old methods."

First, the evolutionary nature of the projected reform has got into conflict with the re-organisation of society started by the Party. This is one of the principal causes of the arising problems, which explains the dearth of resolution and the lack of scope in the reform efforts.

Second, the reform concept is geared to the school employing extensive ways to fulfil its social task. It has prompted the general educational school to begin training senior pupils in the simpler trades on a mass scale, which contradicts the modern requirements made on the quality of vocational training.

Third, the reform has not laid down a programme for thorough-going democratisation in the educational system. The school is still administered by predominantly bureaucratic methods and in a conservative fashion.

Yegor Ligachev said the progress of the school reform is being widely discussed in Soviet society and quite a few proposals have been made, which will definitely be included in the fibre of the plenum's political decisions.

He noted, however, that unacceptable ideas have been voiced as well, such as claims that any change at school must only be partial and gradual or, on the contrary, that the existing educational system must be demolished and a new one built in its place.

Ligachev described such proposals as extremes one cannot agree to.

But there still are grounds, he said, for introducing cardinal changes to the Guidelines for reform at the general educational and vocational schools.

"We are not, of course, going to alter everything that lends itself to change. The Soviet school will remain uniform, work-oriented and polytechnical," Ligachev pointed out, adding that everybody agrees with these principles.

But the school "should not be uniform in the primitive sense of typification and standardisation that still determines the activities of whole collectives of teachers and tells strongly on the way the educational system is run."

Socialism has nothing to do with standardising the forms and methods of work, standardising thoughts, behavioural patterns and actions. More socialism means more diversity.

The prevailing view of school reform is now that "it is necessary above all to ensure the establishment of the general educational school as the basic link in the system of continual education of citizens of our society," Ligachev continued. The school is called upon to give quality secondary education to all boys and girls. Later they will have the opportunity to choose, taking into account their personal and social interests, inclinations and standard of training, whether to enrol in a higher educational establishment, a specialised secondary or vocational school, or learn a trade directly at a work place in production.

"Basic secondary education should be viewed as the socially indispensable level of knowledge, skills, cultural development and independent thinking," Ligachev emphasised. And priority should be given to the quality of knowledge. This criterion has been rolled back to second place so far. The right to creativity, to the choice of methods of tuition and developing novel ideas of education. Everything should

be done to ensure that attention in school is given to the development of the abilities of pupils.

There is logic in relieving the school of the obligation of training workers for the national economy on a mass scale. And giving it the possibility to concentrate on achieving the highest quality of general education and labour upbringing for the young. The system of vocational training should at the same time be decisively improved and upgraded.

This system has come a long way and is a unique supplier of trained personnel. Its graduates make up the core of the Soviet working class. This system annually trains 2.5 million skilled workers — two-thirds of the new entrants to work collectives. But it still lags behind the development of production. As a result there are signs of a shortage of skilled workers. And it means that the technological complexity of operations grows at a much faster pace than the level of workers' skills.

Vocational training should be developed and strengthened as a single state system oriented for tomorrow and based on general secondary education. Much promise is offered by setting up, primarily in major cities, specialised schools capable of training modern, qualified workers in difficult and integrated trades and by making such schools into territorial-sectoral and inter-sectoral training centres.

Specialised secondary educational establishments are to hold their due place in the vocational training system. Some 1.3 million specialists graduate from these educational establishments every year. Radical changes are needed in the structure and the content of the training of cadres and in the forms of organising the educational process for specialised educational establishments reaching a higher level.

In this area, too, it is expedient to switch to training specialists, as a rule, on the basis of general secondary education.

The higher educational institutions face tremendous tasks, Yegor Ligachev continued. Justifiable concern is caused at the same time by disproportions in supplying the national economy with cadres of engineers which have been existing for a long time. A surplus of engineers is trained in some specialities, while there is a shortage in others. There is now, specifically, an acute shortage of economists, particularly in the managerial area.

Yegor Ligachev pointed out that the number of higher educational establishments is increasing but the quality of their work has not been raised. As many as 154 higher educational establishments were opened in the USSR in the
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Mikhail Gorbachev Realities and Guarantees for a Secure World

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Decision of the plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee

ON the speech by Mikhail Gorbachev at the plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee.

Here follows the full text of the decision —

The plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee unanimously approves the provisions and conclusions contained in the speech by Mikhail Gorbachev, "Ideology of Renewal for Revolutionary

Perestroika". The speech contains a profound analysis of the new stage of perestroika and sets forth the programme for its ideological substantiation.

The plenary meeting stresses that all the ideological activities of the Party organisations must be subordinated to mobilising the working people, the work collectives for the resolution of the main tasks of perestroika — carrying out a radical economic reform and ensuring more democracy for the whole social life, education

and upbringing of the rising generation and of the mass of the working people.

The plenary meeting considers necessary a resolute renewal of the forms and methods of ideological, political-educational work, a firm assertion of social justice in conformity with the aims of revolutionary renewal of the Soviet society.

The plenum approves the provisions and assessments of foreign policy issues contained in Mikhail Gorbachev's speech and points out the importance of explaining broadly the humanistic content and aims of the international activities of the CPSU and the Soviet state directed at firmly asserting the principles of equality and universal security in international relations.

The plenum instructs the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee, the central committees of the Communist Parties of the Union Republics, the Party territorial, regional, city and district committees, primary Party organisations to draw attention to the need for a resolute turn by the activists, all the communists towards the ideological content of perestroika, strengthening the ties of the CPSU with the masses, and ensuring the close interaction of the Soviet, trade union, Young Communist League and economic bodies, ideological media and all cadres in the field of the economy, social policy and cultural life. It is necessary to apply all the means of political work so that perestroika should become the Party cause of every communist and the patriotic duty of every citizen.

Communiqué

A RESOLUTION on Mikhail Gorbachev's major speech to the CPSU Central Committee plenum was adopted at the plenary meeting on Thursday.

The plenum further adopted a detailed resolution on the issue discussed in Yegor Ligachev's report "On the Course of Perestroika in Secondary and Higher Grade Schools and the Party's Tasks in Implementing it".

The plenum considered organisational issues.

It elected Yuri Maslyukov Alternate Member of the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee.

The plenum elected Secretary of the CPSU

Central Committee Georgi Razumovsky Alternate Member of the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee.

The plenum elected Oleg Baklanov Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee.

It relieved Boris Yeltsin of the duties of Alternate Member of the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee.

The plenary meeting transferred from Candidates to full Members of the CPSU Central Committee Valeri Boldin, head of the general department of the CPSU Central Committee, Natalya Gellert, machine operator at a state farm in Kazakhstan, and Viktor Mironenko, First Secretary of the Young Communist League Central Committee.

Resolution

THE reform of the general education and vocational school, and higher and secondary specialised education holds a special place in the range of tasks which are being accomplished by the Party at the current historical stage, says the Resolution of the plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee held in Moscow on February 17-18.

The purpose of the transformations being effected is to assure a new quality of the education and upbringing of youth, training and upgrading the qualification of the personnel, thus creating the indispensable conditions for speeding up the socio-economic and spiritual progress of Soviet society, accomplishing the tasks set by the 27th CPSU Congress, the Resolution point out.

The document takes note of some positive changes in the content of education and in students' labour education. At the same time, the CPSU Central Committee holds that the depth and pace of transformations in the secondary and higher school do not meet society's requirements at the new stage of the restructuring. The guideposts of the reform, elaborated prior to the plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee of April 1985, were not shored up by measures to democratise the national education system. The organisational work to give effect to the reform was inadequate.

The plenum of the CPSU Central Committee considers it expedient to introduce changes in the directives of the education reform, bearing in mind, in particular, forming and realising the concept of the universal secondary education of youth as the basis for the subsequent training of the cadres of qualified workers and specialists,

the all-round development of the personality, the all-out democratisation of the nation's education and enhancing the independence and responsibility of the educational institutions' collectives.

The CPSU Central Committee attaches principled importance to the Soviet school being uniform, to give all its students a full-fledged secondary education and open up equal opportunities to them. The unity of the goals and tasks of education should be organically combined with variety of schools, flexibility of study plans and curricula, and reliance on advanced teaching practice and innovative methods of education and upbringing.

The plenum of the CPSU Central Committee puts forward as a practical task the implementation of the strategic directive of the 27th CPSU Congress on creating in the country a system of continual education covering all elements of upbringing and education — pre-school and extra-school institutions, the general educational and vocational school, higher and secondary educational establishments, and the personnel qualification upgrading and re-training system.

The document draws attention to the need to introduce on a broad scale self-government principles, give leeway to educational institutions, vest them with the powers which are necessary for this, and enhance their responsibility for the high quality of education and nurturing of the younger generation.

The plenum underscores the need to enact sweeping measures to forge the material and technical base of the national education, to revamp it and increase funds channelled into its development.

The Resolution of the CPSU Central Committee plenum notes the need to enhance

appreciably the patriotic and international education of young people.

Bilinguality should be developed and the study and teaching of the languages of the peoples of the USSR, and of the Russian language, which was voluntarily accepted by Soviet people as a means of international communication, should be fundamentally improved. It is necessary that the practice of joint study in the Russian and native tongues be extended. Young people of other nationalities should be encouraged to study the local national language. No privileges, limitations or administration are allowed in the issue of the language of study.

USSR-U.S. SUMMIT

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At the CPSU Central Committee Political Bureau

THE meeting of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee held on Friday examined top-priority questions pertaining to ensuring the implementation of the decisions of the February 1988 plenary meeting of the Central Committee. The Party committees, state bodies and public organisations have been instructed to carry out the measures aimed at deepening and broadening the reform of the secondary and higher school in the light of the directives of the plenary meeting. Proceeding from the fundamental provisions contained in the speech by Mikhail Gorbachev at the plenary meeting, the Secretariat of the CPSU Central Committee and Party bodies have been instructed to unfold practical work for improving the ideological substantiation of the new stage of perestroika. The order

has been determined for implementing the critical remarks and proposals expressed by the participants in the plenary meeting of the Central Committee.

The Politburo discussed the draft law of the USSR "On Cooperation in the USSR" which was tabled by the USSR Council of Ministers. The new law is called upon to reveal the tremendous potentialities of cooperation, strengthen its role in accelerating the country's socio-economic development, enhance the process of democratising economic life and create conditions for drawing broad sections of the population into the cooperative movement. The Politburo expressed approval of the draft law "On Cooperation in the USSR" and found it advisable to put it to nationwide discussion.

The results were examined and approved of the meetings of Mikhail Gorbachev and Nikolai Ryzhkov and the talks held by Dmitri Yazov with India's Defence Minister Krishna Chandra Pant. It has been noted that the regular contacts and exchanges of messages with the Indian leadership serve as a pivotal element of friendly Soviet-Indian cooperation aimed at ensuring

reliable peace and security in Asia and the world as a whole. The Politburo confirmed the invariability of the course for further developing and strengthening cooperation with India in all fields — politics, trade, economy, science, technology and defence.

The Politburo approved the results of Mikhail Gorbachev's meeting and Eduard Shevardnadze's talks with British Secretary for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Sir Geoffrey Howe. It was pointed out that the Soviet-British dialogue, the direction and tone for which were set in the course of the meeting of the leaders of the two countries, is becoming increasingly dynamic. It may become an important factor not only for bilateral relations but also for European and world politics.

The significance was stressed of consolidating the positive trends which manifested themselves in Soviet-British relations, deepening and broadening the obtaining infrastructure of ties in all fields, developing both kinds of cooperation that have already proved to be effective, and new ones calculated for the long perspective.

The Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee passed decisions on some other issues of Party and state construction.

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past 20 years but in 44 of them to this day there are one or two doctors of sciences and professors, while eight higher educational establishments do not have any at all. What kind of quality of education can there be in such cases?

The past year saw the beginning of major changes in the work of the higher school. Documents have been adopted whose salient feature is their comprehensive nature, permitting significant headway in realising Lenin's idea of integrating education, production and science. This is the priority to which all resources should be directed. The implementation of the plans has been started. The establishment of a new type of relations between the higher school and branches of the national economy, and the perfection of the economic mechanism of their interaction are becoming the order of the day.

Diversity in the organisational structures of education is unavoidable in the higher school, just as in the secondary school. Their potential considerably enhances still closer cooperation with academic and industrial institutes, enterprises and amalgamations which are to be the prevailing form of research and training of specialists in the higher school.

The restructuring of the country's social life and acceleration of scientific and technological progress pose with unprecedented acuteness the problem of upgrading skills and retraining cadres, Ligachev continued. He substantiated the need to create a network of training centres that will ensure the constant upgrading of the qualifications of not just millions, but tens of millions of workers of every level, rank and position. The setting up of such a system will require much effort, but there will be tangible effects.

"What is meant, on the whole, is the creation of a comprehensive system of continual education," Yegor Ligachev emphasised. "It will organically combine pre-school education, general education, vocational training, higher education, constant accumulation of knowledge and upgrading of skills of workers and specialists. This system will be a real contribution to implementing the policy of perestroika and its slogan — more socialism."

Yegor Ligachev then dwelt on problems of

developing the material base and enhancing the efficiency of managing the Soviet school. "Education is now becoming more and more expensive. Expenditures for education rose 370% in the past quarter century and approached the 40 billion rouble mark. At the same time a tendency towards a lowering in the share of the expenditures for education in the state budget has been evident over a long time."

The report says that the material base of schools is in a different situation. School buildings for 28 million pupils should be commissioned in the years 1990-2000. Capital investments for this purpose are to be almost doubled. The data on technical supply for educational establishments has been given. It was emphasised that it is necessary to speed up the supply of quality computer equipment for the public education system so that computers can be installed in general educational and vocational schools in the coming years.

Ligachev gave much attention to the problems of the management of public education. He emphasised the need to work out a concept of democratic management of public education. The question of setting up councils of educational establishments was specifically raised. They will include not only teachers, but also representatives of pupils, parents, nearby enterprises, etc. The creation of territorial councils for public education was also mentioned. They will be vested with broad powers. The present public education departments in the Soviets can become working bodies of these public councils for education.

Ligachev mentioned the need to develop pedagogical science. He declared that it is time for profound reorganisation of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences.

A special section in his Report is devoted to enriching the content and improving the methods of Party guidance of the school. He emphasised that one of the tasks of the school in the USSR is to bring up Soviet boys and girls as dedicated champions of revolutionary ideas and traditions, people who are striving and capable to uphold and implement the policy of the Party aimed at all-out development of possibilities and advantages of socialism.

In this connection Yegor Ligachev formulated the demands now made on the teaching of

social science, aesthetic education and the development of interest in history. Constant attention should be given to bringing up the young generation in the spirit of internationalism, respect for and friendship with the peoples of the USSR and other countries. National-Russian bilingualism should be developed. Tuition is conducted in the Soviet Union in 39 languages of the peoples of the USSR, and every language is an inalienable part of our common cultural wealth. "No privileges, no restrictions are permissible in the question of language," he emphasised.

Ligachev dwelt with great respect and care on the main force in implementing the school reform, the teacher. "The teacher, the instructor, is the key figure in the reorganisation of the secondary and higher school."

The Party has always regarded the education of the people as an earnest of the success of its entire activity. Therefore, Yegor Ligachev said in conclusion, "the CPSU gives priority to the programme of radically improving education, to advancing the Soviet school. Its implementation is a most important task for the whole Party and the whole people."

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of democratisation and radical economic reform.

We are to take specific decisions on updating our political system and on the Party's role as the political vanguard at the new juncture in the nation's development.

Thereby we shall lend a powerful further impulse to our revolutionary perestroika.

So there is a large amount of hard work lying ahead. The number of innovative ideas and proposals made in the Party and society lately is huge. The mass of specific issues to be tackled is great and keeps growing all the time.

How should we go about resolving them? We should decide this together, moving along the charted path step by step.

We should maintain our quest creatively and daringly and yet in a businesslike and responsible fashion — that is, in short, in a Leninist Bolshevik manner.

Mikhail Gorbachev's meeting with George Shultz

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV had a meeting with U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz in the Kremlin on Monday.

This is another important link in the Soviet-American dialogue which is assuming an ever more substantive and regular nature. We firmly conduct the course at the improvement of Soviet-American relations, Mikhail Gorbachev emphasised. Such is the well-considered decision of the Soviet leadership that expresses the opinion of the entire Soviet people.

We appraise the summit of December last as a major event on this road. Advancing along it we live up to the hopes of the international community. Most states rightly hold that the improvement of relations between the USSR and the USA is in the interests of the whole world.

Personal contacts and personality aspects have played an important role in this process. They have formed a definite potential of mutual understanding. But this process also reflects objective requirements of the world today. This determines the continuity in the policy of the USSR and the USA with regard to each other, the beginning to which was set in Geneva and which has been gaining momentum via Reykjavik and Washington toward the Moscow summit.

During the conversation Mikhail Gorbachev and George Shultz exchanged opinions on the progress in implementation of the arrangements reached in December and the state of the preparation for the coming visit of President Reagan to the USSR.

We proceed from the premise that the success of this visit depends on the intensity with which the joint work proceeds on preparing the questions and documents which will determine the content of the new Soviet-American summit meeting, Mikhail Gorbachev stressed.

It is from these positions that the questions comprising the agenda for the coming months should be viewed.

The question of ratification of the INF Treaty. The interlocutors exchanged information and expressed confidence that it will be ratified

although, naturally, explanations have already been necessary and will yet be necessary to convince that the Treaty is reliable and equitable.

The prospects of concluding a treaty on strategic offensive arms are connected with the ratification. Mikhail Gorbachev expressed the view that while there is still time this treaty should be thoroughly prepared. Although this will require much work. And not only in Geneva but mostly on the level of ministers of foreign affairs. It involves major policy issues and for this reason the principal moments of translating them into concrete accords should be constantly within the field of attention of representatives of the leadership of both countries.

Mikhail Gorbachev advanced a number of new ideas concerning concrete aspects of reducing various types of strategic nuclear arms, with a view to imparting greater dynamism to the ongoing talks and the search for mutually acceptable solutions. In this connection there was a thorough discussion of the question of verification which both sides regard as more complex than in the case of the intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles. The question of observing the ABM Treaty in the form in which it was signed in 1972 was also taken up. The interlocutors confirmed their adherence to the wording on this score which was adopted in the joint Soviet-American Statement at summit level signed in Washington on December 10.

Mikhail Gorbachev expressed amazement at the stand of the USA at the talks on banning chemical weapons, a stand that hampers the working out of an international convention, and advanced proposals that could be jointly worked out by the time of the summit in Moscow.

The interlocutors confirmed their assessment of the importance of solving the problem of conventional armaments and armed forces in Europe and agreed to step up the efforts to work out the mandate for the Conference in Vienna. In this connection Mikhail Gorbachev raised acutely the question of unacceptability of the plans for 'compensation' which, if implemented, can devalue the Treaty on the elimination of intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles and everything that has been achieved in the interests of international security of late.

Regional conflicts have been thoroughly discussed. We — the USSR and the USA — must set the world an example of interaction

in this most important area of international life on the basis of balancing the interests of all the parties concerned without exception. Mikhail Gorbachev pointed out. Distrust for our sincere striving to finally stamp out the regional seats of international danger stems from the fact that they in the West continue holding that the Soviet Union is chiefly to blame for their existence.

The situation now favours peaceful settlement of crises. Factors of an internal nature — on the part of those who are directly involved in these crises — and factors of a comprehensive nature, stands that have become prevalent in the world community, are operating.

That is why the responsibility of the two great powers, the USSR and the United States, also increases. For 45 years they were dominated by the concept of confrontation. Is it not time now for us to try to exercise our international responsibility on the basis of a search for coinciding interests, Mikhail Gorbachev emphasised.

He linked the settlement of regional conflicts with the deep-rooted processes taking place in the contemporary world, with the problem of the growing inter-dependence of its various parts. If this is ignored, if nothing is done it will be possible of course to hold out for 20-30 years, while increasing the risk of missing the moment when the development of events will catch everybody unawares and mankind's common home will start falling apart. Mikhail Gorbachev proposed to start a joint study of these most pressing problems.

On the question of Afghanistan the interlocutors again declared for the forthcoming round of the Geneva talks to be the last one. The Soviet Union never had and does not have any secret plans or intentions whatsoever in respect of Afghanistan, Mikhail Gorbachev stated, such as creating some sort of a bridgehead there and so forth. The Soviet Union will firmly and consistently act in accordance with the February 8 Statement.

Mikhail Gorbachev invited George Shultz to adhere to the existing accords facilitating the ending of the conflict in forms ruling out bloodshed and ensuring Afghanistan the position of an independent, nonaligned and neutral state. And this requires that the Afghans themselves settle their affairs without any outside interference.

Concerning the question of the Iran-Iraq war and the Persian Gulf situation, Mikhail Gorbachev promised George Shultz to discuss some ideas he had advanced.

Mikhail Gorbachev expressed his opinion about the plan for a Middle East settlement recently proposed by the Americans: the plan is inconsistent, is not in keeping with the principle of taking into consideration the interests of all the sides involved. It emphasises intermediate measures and steps to which the USSR does not object in principle, but which, as has already become clear to many, can yield results only in the context of the decision to convene an international conference, that is, in the context of a comprehensive settlement. It was agreed to resume the exchange of opinions after George Shultz makes a trip to the Middle East.

George Shultz informed Mikhail Gorbachev of the interest in the problem of human rights he showed during his current visit.

The calm and serious discussion of the essence of the problems and ways of solving them by which the conversation was marked showed the awareness of its participants of the responsibility for the developments in the world today.

Mikhail Gorbachev's message to Hans Blix

"THE INF Treaty is but a first, although very important step towards the nuclear-free world and its place in history will largely depend on those even more radical steps on disarmament that are to follow it," says a return message from Mikhail Gorbachev to Hans Blix, Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Blix sent a letter to Mikhail Gorbachev in which he highly assessed the Treaty on the elimination of intermediate- and shorter-range missiles signed in Washington and other accords reached during the summit meeting.

One should not stop at what has been achieved, Gorbachev pointed out. The USSR is doing its utmost so that the first half of 1988 sees not only the conclusion of the

Soviet-American treaty on 50% reduction of strategic offensive arms given observance of the ABM Treaty but also the conclusion of the drafting of the convention on a comprehensive ban on chemical weapons and real tangible actions towards a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing.

Gorbachev emphasised that many other existing agreements on the limitation of arms, specifically the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and IAEA safeguards ensuring its effective functioning, are acquiring a qualitatively new connotation on the threshold of the new era of ridding mankind of nuclear and other weapons of mass annihilation.

"The Soviet Union is invariably committed to the objectives and tasks of this Treaty, favours its strict observance and the consolidation of the international regime of nuclear weapon non-proliferation established on its basis."

Nikolai Ryzhkov's meeting with George Shultz

NIKOLAI RYZHKOV, Member of the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee and Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, received U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz on Monday.

In the course of their businesslike and constructive meeting they examined important issues of Soviet-American political relations, world economic problems and the two countries' approaches to dealing with them, as well as the situation in trade and economic contacts between the USSR and the United States and prospects for developing mutually beneficial cooperation in this sphere.

Ryzhkov said security, radical arms cuts and real disarmament remain priority issues on the agenda of the Soviet-American political dialogue. The Washington summit has given a strong fillip to the process of pulling the USSR-U.S. relationship out of protracted confrontation.

Shultz agreed with the need to solve overriding security issues, in particular the problem of deep cuts in strategic offensive arms, and carry Soviet-American relations forward in the broader context as well. He also called for steps to strengthen trust.

In reply he was told that stronger trust in bilateral relations and in world affairs in general could be a result of mutual efforts. "The Soviet Union is doing the maximum possible in this field and we have good reason to believe that

a similar attitude should be demonstrated by the United States as well," Ryzhkov said.

He briefed the U.S. Secretary of State in detail on the progress of the perestroika (restructuring) drive in the Soviet Union and the radical economic reform that also opens up new opportunities for international cooperation.

A thorough exchange of views was held on prospects for trade and economic relations between the USSR and the United States. Both sides agreed that in the political conditions created by the Washington meeting there have emerged possibilities for mutually beneficial cooperation in other areas as well.

Ryzhkov stressed that Soviet-American business relations still remain an area of untapped possibilities and neither the scale and pattern nor the forms of economic cooperation as they are today can satisfy the sides.

"In the Soviet Union it is believed that our two countries can become really useful to each other, by developing wide-ranging and mutually advantageous trade and economic relations on the basis of equality, stability and the desire to find common interests in this field of bilateral relations, too," he emphasised.

"The way to giving trade and economic contacts a solid long-term foundation is one of basing them on real economic and commercial interests. Such interests do exist, both as far as Soviet enterprises and organisations are concerned and as far as American business is concerned.

"In conditions where the overall political

atmosphere has noticeably improved, the business quarters of the two countries are already beginning to take advantage of the new situation in practical terms. The political leaderships of both the Soviet Union and the United States should all the more so be applying further efforts to preserve and enhance the constructive processes showing in business relations," the Soviet head of government pointed out.

He added that such conditions should be provided as will make for sound economic interests themselves shaping the specific structure of cooperation.

Shultz said the U.S. Administration supports the line of developing commercial relations in forms that meet the laws and norms of both countries.

Specific steps were discussed that both sides could take to facilitate business contacts between the organisations and firms of the two countries.

A positive view was expressed of joint efforts by U.S. businesses and Soviet organisations and enterprises to use new forms of economic cooperation.

The efforts of major American firms and Soviet organisations, now being completed, to create foreign economic consortiums in both countries that aim at intensively developing Soviet-American trade and economic contacts, including joint ventures, were evaluated as an important development in this field.

It was pointed out that the businesslike and constructive exchange of opinions on the matters discussed was positively rated by both sides and will be continued.

Joint Soviet-American Statement

THE first of a series of agreed-upon meetings between Eduard Shevardnadze, Member of the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee and USSR Minister of Foreign Affairs, and George Shultz, United States Secretary of State, was held in Moscow on Monday.

All aspects of Soviet-American relations were discussed in detail during the conversations in which Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Lieutenant-General Colin Powell took part. Preparation was started for the summit meeting between Mikhail Gorbachev and President of the United States Ronald Reagan to be held in Moscow in the first half of 1988.

Secretary of State George Shultz and Colin Powell were received by Mikhail Gorbachev and had a meeting with Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers Nikolai Ryzhkov.

The sides agreed that it is important to advance steadily in the months ahead in the entire set of Soviet-American relations, including arms limitation and reduction, human rights, regional problems and bilateral matters. For this purpose they gave priority attention to implementation of the arrangements and instructions on which the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee and the President of the United States agreed during the Washington meeting. Eduard Shevardnadze and George Shultz will meet in Washington in March to discuss progress toward the achievement of these goals and to continue close coordination of actions for the preparation of President Reagan's visit to the USSR.

During the meetings in the past two days, the sides held a candid and constructive discussion of human rights and humanitarian matters.

They discussed outstanding matters related to talks on nuclear and space arms, nuclear testing, armed forces and conventional armaments, and chemical weapons.

They confirmed the obligation contained in the joint Statement adopted as a result of the Washington summit to intensify the efforts in order to conclude the drafting of a treaty on strategic offensive arms limitation and reduction and all related documents "at the earliest possible date, preferably in time for signature of the treaty during the next meeting of leaders of state in the first half of 1988".

The ministers discussed the entire complex of questions related to the treaty, having given special attention to the quest for solution of problems on which the stands differ so far. Specifically, emphasising the importance of verification, they instructed their representatives at the talks to prepare for the March ministerial meeting the joint drafts of the protocol on inspection, the protocol on conversion or elimination of strategic offensive arms and a draft memorandum of understanding which will be integral to the treaty on reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms.

As to the ABM Treaty which was discussed during the Washington summit, they also instructed their representatives in the talks to seek arrangement, basing themselves on the wording contained in the joint Statement of Mikhail Gorbachev and United States President Ronald Reagan of 10 December 1987.

Noting the progress achieved at the

Soviet-American full-scale stage-by-stage talks on matters related to the problem of nuclear testing, the ministers instructed their delegations to speed up work on the protocols on the verification of the 1974 and 1976 Soviet-American treaties on underground nuclear explosions so as to conclude the drafting of the protocols to be considered at the next ministerial meeting. The ministers agreed that this reflects the aim set at the Washington summit of ensuring the ratification of the two treaties by both sides in accordance with their national legislation and practice.

The ministers discussed the questions related to the truly global, comprehensive banning of chemical weapons, lending itself to effective verification. They discussed outstanding problems, exchanged views on the ways of confidence-building and enhancing openness and agreed to study ideas about concrete ways of ensuring progress and intensifying talks to conclude a convention applying to all countries capable of having chemical weapons.

There was an exchange of opinions on the state of affairs at the Vienna meeting on working out the mandate for talks on armed forces and conventional armaments. This made it possible to specify the positions of the sides and achieve their more profound understanding. The results of these consultations will be brought to the notice of appropriate representatives in Vienna so as to promote the conclusion of the work on the mandate.

The ministers had an extensive and frank exchange of opinions on regional matters including Afghanistan, Iran-Iraq war, peaceful settlement in the Middle East, Kampuchea, southern Africa, Central America and the Korean peninsula.