

Mikhail Gorbachev's message to Soviet Azerbaijani and Armenian peoples

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, addressed the peoples of Soviet Azerbaijan and Soviet Armenia on Friday in connection with developments in Nagorny Karabakh and around it.

He said in his address that there are unresolved problems in the life of Soviet society but the fomenting of strife and mistrust among peoples only hinders their resolution and is contrary to the socialist principles and morals and to the traditions of friendship and fraternity of the Soviet people.

The address recalled that it is intended to devote one of the forthcoming plenums of the CPSU Central Committee specially to the issue of developing relations between nationalities in the USSR and to

outline specific ways of solving socio-economic, cultural and other problems.

The address called for strengthening in every way the traditions of friendship between the Azerbaijani and Armenian peoples established during the years of Soviet Government and for displaying civic maturity and composure.

The following interviews given to TASS correspondents demonstrate how the address was received in the Soviet Transcaucasian republics of Azerbaijan and Armenia.

I. Bagirov, First Secretary of the Amasiya District Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia and Vice-President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic, has stated that Armenia is immeasurably close to him as a son of the Azerbaijani people. "I know well the greatness of the soul of the people who live here and their lofty sentiments. I was born in Yerevan and I

have lived in this fine republic all my life. I have never experienced any feeling of a stepson. It is precisely here that I graduated from an Azerbaijani school and received a higher education. Working in the internationalist Vardenis and Amasiya districts, I saw for myself every day how Armenians and Azerbaijanians work and live in concord. I heard from old men more than once that members of our people at all times helped one another and shared the living bread. It is precisely they who bequeathed this friendship to us. Mikhail Gorbachev's message is calling upon us sacredly to keep and in every way to strengthen the traditions of this friendship."

"The Party," emphasised N. Hazri, People's Poet of Azerbaijan, "made an exceptionally accurate evaluation of the events in Nagorny Karabakh and around it. I wholeheartedly share Mikhail Gorbachev's idea that all Soviet people have a common history, common triumphs, they have jointly experienced great work, misfortunes and losses. We have a single destiny, one road

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Mikhail Gorbachev's message to Robert Mugabe

ROBERT MUGABE, Chairman of the Nonaligned Movement and President of Zimbabwe, received in Harare on Friday Ambassador-at-large Vyacheslav Ustinov, special representative of the Soviet leadership, who conveyed to him an oral message from Mikhail Gorbachev on Afghanistan.

During the meeting Robert Mugabe spoke positively of the Soviet Union's initiative for settling the situation regarding Afghanistan.

He described the related Statement by the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee on February 8 as a sensible step in the right direction, which could be used as an example in dealing with other international problems.

It was pointed out that the proposal on the Soviet troop withdrawal from Afghanistan offered a real way of settling the protracted conflict in the region.

The Zimbabwean leader expressed the hope for a successful conclusion of the Geneva talks between Afghanistan and Pakistan. He also stressed the Nonaligned Movement's readiness to facilitate an Afghan settlement.

Robert Mugabe asked Ustinov to convey his gratitude for the message and the best of wishes to Mikhail Gorbachev.

At the CPSU Central Committee Political Bureau

AT its meeting on Thursday the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee discussed and approved the results of the conversations of the Soviet leaders Mikhail Gorbachev and Nikolai Ryzhkov and the talks by Eduard Shevardnadze with the U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz during his visit in Moscow.

It was stressed that the series of Soviet-American political contacts at high level is of extraordinary importance for implementing the accords reached in Washington and intensifying joint activity to work out questions and prepare documents for the new summit in Moscow.

The conclusion at the forthcoming meeting of Soviet and American leaders of the treaty on a 50% reduction of strategic offensive arms in conditions of compliance with the ABM Treaty in the form in which it was signed in 1972 will be a great step in the field of genuine reduction of nuclear arms and strengthening security for all.

The Soviet initiatives that were set forth during the talks are directed at giving a new impulse to the search for mutually acceptable solutions to a wide range of problems of disarmament, to settling regional conflict situations and improving Soviet-American relations and the situation in the world in general. The Soviet leadership is prepared further to solve these problems in a calm and serious spirit which testifies to understanding of the responsibility borne by the Soviet Union and the United States for the peaceful development of the entire international situation.

The Politburo heard a report by Eduard Shevardnadze on the results of the meeting in Prague of the ministers of foreign affairs of

Warsaw Treaty member states. It noted with satisfaction the unanimous support displayed by the allies during the meeting for the USSR's constructive and consistent line in relations with the United States that was agreed upon with them.

The Politburo studied the Soviet Government's proposal on retooling the light industry. It approved the programme of accelerating scientific and technological progress in the light industry presented by the government. It is intended in the period 1988 to 1995 to ensure a substantial increase in the output of goods and a growth of their quality on the basis of the radical retooling of production and the extensive use of modern equipment and technology.

Questions of implementing the energy programme of the USSR and the development of the power industry were studied. It was stressed that in present-day conditions the reliable supply of the national economy and population with fuel and energy is especially important and is a key precondition for attaining in practice the tasks of perestroika and pursuing a vigorous social policy.

At the same time it was noted that a number of key assignments stipulated by the energy programme of the USSR are not being fulfilled in a satisfactory manner. It was suggested to the heads of the branches of the fuel-and-energy and machine-building complexes that they take urgent measures to increase the increment of production capacities and their better utilisation to ensure the definite fulfilment of the USSR's energy programme. Special attention should be given to enhancing the saving of fuel and energy resources and building up the potential of machine-building for the power industry.

At its meeting the Politburo also studied some other questions of the economic and social policy of the CPSU and the Soviet state.

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Joint Soviet-Hungarian Communiqué

A JOINT Soviet-Hungarian Communiqué on the results of the official friendly visit by Andrei Gromyko, Member of the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee and President of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, to the Hungarian People's Republic points out the consonance of the restructuring process in the Soviet Union and the goals and tasks envisaged by the Hungarian stabilisation and development programme. The Communiqué was issued in Budapest on Friday.

Andrei Gromyko stayed in Hungary from February 23 at the invitation of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party and the Presidium of the Hungarian People's Republic.

"The Soviet Union and Hungary are full of determination to continue to cooperate closely in international affairs and to intensify efforts

aimed at radically improving the political climate in the world, at removing the nuclear threat and at creating a comprehensive system of international peace and security."

The Communiqué emphasises the historic significance of the Treaty between the Soviet Union and the United States on the elimination of their intermediate- and shorter-range missiles. "The signing of the Treaty shows the possibility of a turn from the arms race to real nuclear disarmament. The conclusion of an agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States on a 50% cut in strategic offensive arms, with the sides' compliance with the ABM Treaty in the form in which it was signed in 1972 and non-withdrawal from it during an agreed period, will be a cardinal measure along the way."

The conviction of the sides is that it is necessary that no steps should be taken which could hamper the realisation of the existing agreements and accords in the field of disarmament and the reaching of new ones.

"In the interests of advancing the process of disarmament in Europe and lowering the level of military confrontation, building confidence and

goodneighbourliness between countries, the sides firmly intend, following the collectively worked out policy of the Warsaw Treaty member states and in the spirit of the Budapest Address, to seek a substantial reduction in armed forces and conventional arms in Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals."

The two sides declare in favour of completing the Vienna follow-up meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) as soon as possible and crowning it with tangible mutually acceptable accords.

Determination to promote the search for ways for a fair negotiated settlement of regional conflicts and crisis situations in various parts of the world was reaffirmed. The Hungarian side welcomes Mikhail Gorbachev's Statement of February 8 as a specific manifestation of the new political thinking which opens the way for a political settlement of the Afghan situation.

The two countries come out in favour of further enhancing the role of the United Nations Organisation and making it an effective instrument for strengthening peace and international security.

(from front page)

and goal, and one indivisible motherland. The ancient land of Karabakh is the home of both Azerbaijanians and Armenians. We are brothers forever, and this expresses everything."

"Mikhail Gorbachev's message," pointed out A. Mirzoyan, leader of a workers' team at the Armenian Electrical Engineering Amalgamation, "very correctly emphasises the idea that it is now important to evaluate one's concerns within the context not only of local conditions but also with due regard for the revolutionary renewal processes taking place in the country. In this matter the working class should reaffirm its best qualities — cohesion and consciousness — for it is responsible for everything in the country."

"The ties of brotherhood and friendship have been keeping together the Azerbaijanian and Armenian peoples for centuries," said M. Abullayev, a prominent artist. "In Soviet times the sentiments bequeathed to us by our forefathers have received new socialist content which is the essence of the internationalism and friendship of the peoples of the USSR. We should cherish this traditional friendship and strengthen it. This is what Mikhail Gorbachev reminded us of in his message. This Party document which is imbued with profound concern over the development of events is yet another reminder that one should not leave the most serious matters involving people's destiny in the grip of spontaneous actions and emotions. The friendship of our peoples has been bequeathed to us for ever, and it should be preserved and multiplied."

S. Arutyunova, a radio equipment fitter at the Geofizpribor production amalgamation in Baku:

"An Armenian by nationality, I am proud of being a member of one of the fraternal peoples of the USSR where all people, regardless of their nationalities, have equal rights and opportunities. Isn't this demonstrated, for example, by the fact that I am a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan?"

"Mikhail Gorbachev was right when he said in his address to the peoples of Azerbaijan and Armenia that not even the slightest damage must be allowed to the internationalist cohesion of our peoples. Everybody today should show maximum common sense and calm, maximum self-control and discipline."

S. Petrosyan, Member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia and foreman of a team of machine operatives at

the Nairit research-production amalgamation, said this:

"As a working man I wish to look at what takes place in the republic from the viewpoint of a worker in industry. A number of industrial enterprises in Yerevan have been in a fever of late as people were leaving their work places to take part in demonstrations and meetings in connection with the events in Nagorno Karabakh. This can lead to sorry results in the economy. This is why we receive with approval Comrade Gorbachev's address. This is precisely the way to speak to the people, when objective information, candidly given, is accompanied by profound political generalisations. I believe that every word, every idea in this address will help stabilise the situation in our two republics for the sake of the triumph of the Leninist policy of nationalities and in the name of the ideas of perestroika."

M. Akopdzhanyan, a worker at a factory making oriental musical instruments in the city of Shusha, the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic, said this — "I was born in Shusha. Azerbaijanians and Armenians have been living here side by side from time immemorial. Children from our families communicate with one another in three languages. If they stop speaking just one of these languages, this would mean that we ceased to understand the main thing — the language of our socialist internationalism. I believe that a tense situation which developed in our autonomous region cannot shake the friendship between the Azerbaijanian and the Armenian peoples."

S. Muchayev, leader of a team of foundrymen at a machine-building factory in Baku, capital of Azerbaijan:

"The events in the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region have upset all our multinational collective, including Russians, Azerbaijanis, Armenians, Georgians . . .

"Let's give a thought as to why it all happened. Isn't it because we have been smugly complacent for too long, without giving due attention to the nationalities issue and internationalist education?"

"We have to apply yet quite an effort for the ideas of internationalism to reach the heart and mind of everyone and for no dubious arguments to be able to disturb the stability of our great gain — the fraternal friendship of the Soviet peoples."

Actor G. Kaplanyan, head of the board of the Theatrical Workers' Union of Armenia, said —

"All our history and achievements are evidence that in the fraternal family of the peoples of the USSR each republic has been given the possibility to develop harmoniously.

"But this does not mean that all the problems have been solved, in particular when it comes to the mutual enrichment of cultures. We Armenians and Azerbaijanis have much to share in this respect. So let's get over the heated arguments and talking and get down to business."

"We, inhabitants of Nagorno Karabakh," declared A. Asriyan, a Great Patriotic War and labour veteran, "should spare neither energies nor efforts to ensure order and normalise life in the region. We want friendship with the Azerbaijani people with whom we have lived and worked side by side for ages. It just couldn't be otherwise. After all, we live in a multinational country. The Russians, Azerbaijanis, Ukrainians and Georgians are all our brothers. Our wish is to be worthy brothers for them."

Farmer S. Aliyeva from Azerbaijan emphasised — "I do not believe and shall never believe that the age-old friendship of the two neighbours, brother peoples could develop a breach. Calm and common sense should become the main advisers in the current situation. We are a great community called the Soviet people and we have one and the same motherland — the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics."

V. Melkonyan, a worker at the Idzhevan Woodworking Factory in Armenia, said that Mikhail Gorbachev was right to note that there were quite a few problems both in Armenia and Azerbaijan.

"The housing issue can be safely reckoned among them," he said. "So is it worthwhile for us to hinder the resolution of vital and important problems by kindling strife and mistrust among ethnic groups? It is better — by keeping the traditions of friendship and through shock work and discipline — to make the maximum contribution to fulfilling the housing programme and achieve success with the perestroika drive."

The Peoples of the Soviet Union Facts and Figures

The above Novosti brochure is available from Soviet Books 3 Rosary Gardens London SW7 4NW.
Price 45p.

Yegor Ligachev's talks with Ali Salim al-Biedh

YEGOR LIGACHEV, Member of the Politburo and Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, met at the CPSU Central Committee on Monday with Ali Salim al-Biedh, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Yemen Socialist Party.

As opinions were exchanged on the situation in the Middle East, it was stressed that the current mass protests by Palestinian people against the regime of terror and violence established by Israel in occupied Arab lands have lent further urgency to the need to launch a collective quest without delay within the framework of a special international conference for ways of achieving an enduring and fair settlement in the Middle East, based on a reasonable balance of interests of all the sides involved in the conflict.

Note was taken also of the importance of continuing the world community's efforts to put an end to the hostilities between Iran and Iraq and settle contentious issues by political means in keeping with the U.N. Security Council's Resolution 598.

The sides discussed some issues of relations between the Soviet Union and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, which have been developing on the basis of a Soviet-South Yemeni Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, and reaffirmed the mutual desire to continue broadening and furthering them.

The meeting passed in an atmosphere of friendship and mutual understanding.

Eduard Shevardnadze's talks with Abdul Wakil

EDUARD SHEVARDNADZE, Member of the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee and USSR Foreign Minister, met on Friday Abdul Wakil, Member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan and Foreign Minister of the Republic of Afghanistan, who stopped over in Moscow on the way to Geneva for the Afghan-Pakistani talks.

During the conversation, the ministers discussed in detail the questions connected with the political settlement of the situation around Afghanistan in the context of the statements of Mikhail Gorbachev and President of the Republic of Afghanistan Najibullah on February 8, 1988. It was noted that these documents have evoked a broad positive response from most foreign politicians and statesmen and from the international public as being documents that form a real basis for the early constructive solution of the Afghan problem.

The sides emphasised the untenability of the stand of those forces who try to disrupt the Geneva process, who wish to make the signing of the Geneva agreement on an end to outside interference and withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan a sort of hostage to such an

internal Afghan matter as a creation of a coalition government.

The sides emphasised the firmness of the Soviet Union's and Afghanistan's intentions to finally formalise and sign the Geneva agreements at the March round so as to embark on practical steps for the solution of the Afghan conflict.

Abdul Wakil informed Eduard Shevardnadze in detail of the implementation of the course at achieving national reconciliation in Afghanistan and of the efforts of the Afghan side to settle external aspects of the Afghan problem; he spoke about his recent visits to Syria, Libya, Kuwait and Jordan.

Eduard Shevardnadze dwelt on the steps of the Soviet side toward implementing the line agreed upon with the Afghan leadership, specifically steps at the talks with U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz held the other day in Moscow, and on the trips of Mikhail Gorbachev's special representatives to a number of Asian and African countries. Eduard Shevardnadze confirmed the Soviet Union's readiness to act jointly with the USA as guarantors of a political settlement of the situation around Afghanistan.

Some other international matters were touched upon during the conversation.

The meeting passed in a warm and friendly atmosphere.

Afghanistan — road to settlement paved

"THE development of the situation around Afghanistan is entering a crucial, critical stage. The road to settlement has been paved, and anyone blocking it would bear grave responsibility for it before the

international community and history," *Pravda* said on Friday.

The newspaper's editorial article pointed out that "today there is hardly a country in which the Afghan issue is not discussed by the press, statesmen, politicians or public figures.

"This issue has been placed in the centre of the world's attention by the peace initiative advanced jointly by Mikhail Gorbachev and Afghan President Najibullah. The general reaction of the world public to the announcement of an acceptable-for-all schedule for withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan has shown that this constructive initiative is approved and supported by all those who really want a political settlement around Afghanistan and an improved international atmosphere."

"The Afghan opposition and the leaders of Pakistan, NATO and other countries, supporting it, claimed till recently that the presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan was a stumbling block in the way of the Afghan problem's solution. Now that this 'obstacle' is being removed, some of them begin to look for various kinds of subterfuges to slow down the solution of the conflict," *Pravda* pointed out.

"Peace and national reconciliation in Afghanistan does not suit some Western patrons of the Afghan opposition, who are ready to struggle 'to the last Afghan' to inflict economic, political and moral damage on the Soviet Union. Certain quarters in Pakistan apparently are interested in the continuation of the conflict too, as they have asked the United States for more and more up-to-date weapons under that pretext.

"Finally, the extremist wing of the Afghan opposition, claiming undivided power and refusing to face the Afghan realities, are actually against peace agreements," the newspaper continued.

"The Afghan people themselves will decide who will govern them and which road to follow. The Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev's statement emphasises, will be glad to have a peaceful, independent, nonaligned and neutral Afghanistan as its neighbour."

Eduard Shevardnadze's talks with Miguel d'Escoto

EDUARD SHEVARDNADZE had a meeting in Moscow on Friday with visiting Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Miguel d'Escoto.

They held a substantive exchange of opinions on bilateral relations and some international problems, including those connected with the need to settle existing regional conflicts.

Note was taken, among the positive trends in settling conflict situations, of the desire for national reconciliation, the involvement of regional organisations and the increased role of the United Nations.

Shevardnadze stressed that the Soviet Union invariably follows a policy of principle directed at easing tension in Central America and achieving an early end to the undeclared war against Nicaragua.

He expressed the firm conviction that the only possibility to ensure this is the peaceful settlement of the regional conflict, just as of other similar situations, by political means in the spirit of realism and with regard for the rightful interests of the sides concerned.

Shevardnadze spoke in detail about the Soviet Union's additional steps towards intensifying

international efforts in support of a Central American settlement.

D'Escoto set forth the Nicaraguan leadership's point of view on the current situation in the region and briefed his Soviet counterpart on specific measures being taken to implement the Guatemala accords aimed at bringing about an enduring and just peace in Central America.

Both ministers pointed to the need to renounce actions preventing the realisation of these accords.

As Soviet-Nicaraguan relations were discussed, the sides voiced satisfaction with the achieved level of cooperation and reaffirmed their mutual desire to further develop and steadily strengthen multifaceted ties between the two countries.

Touching on the problems of the present-day world, the ministers called for wide-ranging and vigorous activities to create a comprehensive system of international peace and security.

The Nicaraguan minister expressed a high opinion of the Soviet Union's active policy of principle in the field of disarmament.

The meeting was held in a cordial and comradely atmosphere.

Eduard Shevardnadze's talks with Milos Jakes

THE Czechoslovak leadership and the people of Czechoslovakia support the Soviet Union's course towards diminishing the threat of nuclear war and achieving a change for the better in international affairs, Milos Jakes, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, said last Tuesday.

He was addressing Eduard Shevardnadze, Member of the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee and Foreign Minister of the USSR, in Prague to attend a meeting of Warsaw Treaty foreign ministers.

On instructions from Mikhail Gorbachev, Shevardnadze informed the Czechoslovak Communist Party leader about the results of the Moscow talks with U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz.

It was observed that the Soviet-American talks reaffirmed the mutual understanding of the importance of advancement in the military-political sphere on the basis of the Washington summit agreements both for Soviet-American relations and for improving the world situation in general.

Jakes noted that Czechoslovakia fully backs the efforts directed at concluding the treaty on a 50% cut in the strategic offensive arsenals of the USSR and the United States given compliance with the ABM Treaty.

Shevardnadze set out the Soviet leadership's assessment of the situation in the world and in Europe following Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to the United States and the signing of the INF Treaty.

Jakes pointed to incompatibility of the plans to 'offset' the eliminated missiles by building up other types of U.S. and NATO weaponry in

Europe and around Europe and the task of preserving and developing positive trends that have become evident in strengthening European and world security.

Both parties noted with satisfaction that the peaceful foreign policy course of the socialist countries, based on new political thinking in international affairs, is gaining the extensive support of world public opinion and enhancing the prestige of socialism around the world.

Congratulatory telegram to Czechoslovak leaders

THE CPSU Central Committee, the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet and the Soviet Government last week cordially congratulated the Czechoslovak leaders and the working people of the Republic on the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of the February Victory.

"On winning the February Victory over reaction under the leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, millions of Czechs and Slovaks made their choice in favour of socialism," points out the congratulatory telegram. "The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, true to the ideas and goals of the February Victory, centres today the energy of communists, the working class and the entire people on pressing issues of the country's development and on improving the socialist system."

The CPSU Central Committee, the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet and the USSR Council of Ministers pointed out that "unity of the CPSU and the CPC and the inviolable friendship between the peoples of the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia have always been a sound foundation for fruitful development of bilateral cooperation." They expressed confidence that concurrence of the general directions of radical perestroika in the USSR and Czechoslovakia "will be an important impetus for raising the entire range of Soviet-Czechoslovak relations to a new qualitative level."

Eduard Shevardnadze's message to Belgrade Conference

EDUARD SHEVARDNADZE has sent a message to Yugoslavia's Federal Secretary for Foreign Affairs Budimir Loncar in connection with the conference of the Balkan nations' foreign ministers which opened in Belgrade last week.

In his message Eduard Shevardnadze asked Budimir Loncar to convey wishes of successful and fruitful work to the foreign ministers.

"We think highly of the political potential of the Balkan states and their vigorous activities for the benefit of peace and general security and in the interest of building the common European home.

"In the Soviet Union the efforts of the states of the Balkan peninsula to launch a pan-Balkan dialogue and develop regional co-

operation in various fields are viewed with understanding and goodwill.

"There can be no doubt that improvements in the political climate in the Balkans will not only be to the advantage of the countries of that region, but also have a positive effect on the situation in the world as a whole."

"We are actively for such optimum solutions to be found everywhere in the world, including the Balkans, that will facilitate greater security and promote accord in the name of peace and progress," the Soviet Foreign Minister emphasised.

"The path to this lies, in our opinion, through stronger trust among nations, through the moral-political atmosphere conducive to ridding humanity of nuclear and chemical weapons and to radical cuts also in other kinds of weaponry, and through a wider zone of interaction in various fields."

Soviet delegation at CSCE meeting in Vienna

THE Conference on European Security and Cooperation meeting in Vienna has come close to the point of taking important political decisions, on which the development of the situation in the European continent will depend in large measure, stressed head of the USSR's delegation Yuri Kashlev. The contours of agreements on key issues of security and cooperation within the CESC framework possible at this stage of East-West relations have become outlined clearly enough, he pointed out, addressing a press conference at the all-European meeting's press centre on Friday.

Yet this perspective can be called in question, considering extremist sentiments remaining among a part of the delegations and an unworthy approach being advocated according to the principle that it is 'either all or nothing'. The Vienna meeting is in for the same danger, Yuri Kashlev said, if the delegations of the Western countries seek, as before, unilateral benefits and advantages, disregard the interests and concerns

of their partners in the talks. The Soviet delegation has repeatedly said that a revision is out of the question of the fundamentals of the Helsinki process, of the basic international papers on human rights, international covenants and norms of international law. Yet this is precisely what some delegations of the Western countries continue seeking.

The Soviet delegation is prepared to place on record the right of citizens to leave any country, including their own, yet, certainly, with the reservations involved in national security, which are contained in the international covenant on human rights, Yuri Kashlev said. Yet we are told that this is not enough, and that we should give up the reservations albeit they are envisaged in the Soviet laws.

We agree to broaden considerably the provision on religion in the final document. We are told that this is not enough and that we should give up references to the constitutional framework and national laws, albeit this is unacceptable for our society where, according to the Constitution, the church is separated from the state and the school from the church. These are only some of the examples of a lack of realism, excessive appetites, when the tactics 'all or nothing' may lead to nothing.

The experience of the latest sessions is proof that given flexibility and a realistic approach, progress on involved issues is possible. Now the opportunity has appeared, the head of the Soviet delegation emphasised, to come close to an agreement on continuing the Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe. As a result of efforts taken from different sides, prospects have manifested themselves in recent days for considerable progress on the question of contacts between people. Specific ideas that could clear the way towards reaching agreements on many other issues are now on the negotiating table.

Yet all this now hangs poised in mid-air, as has happened more than once in the past, and a narrow group of Western delegations known for their ultra-extremism and reluctance, or perhaps inability, to conduct a diplomatic dialogue, have appeared on the stage. These delegations, despite the more than 13-year-old history of the Helsinki process, are unable to grasp such elementary notions as the balance of interests, consensus, sensible compromise and many other things.

The sooner political realism triumphs, Yuri Kashlev noted, the speedier we will achieve specific results.

USSR Supreme Soviet commission discusses INF treaty

"THE signing of the Soviet-American treaty on eliminating intermediate and shorter-range missiles is a result of the consistent struggle by the Soviet Union for lessening international tensions, reciprocal steps by the United States and, lastly, the efforts of the whole world public who have contributed in no small measure towards creating a favourable atmosphere for signing this history-making document," Georgi Kornienko, Deputy of the USSR Supreme Soviet, first deputy head of the International Department of the CPSU Central Committee, said on Monday. He was addressing the session of the preparatory commission, the working body of the Commission for Foreign Affairs of the chambers of the USSR Supreme Soviet, which is continuing the discussion of the INF treaty.

The session of the preparatory committee was attended on Monday by representatives of the Soviet public, who are to set forth their viewpoint in connection with the ratification of the Soviet-American treaty. Kornienko continued.

Radomir Bogdanov, chairman of the Disarmament Commission of the Soviet Peace Committee, who was the first to speak, pointed to the "broad public participation in the hearings in connection with ratifying the Soviet-American INF treaty." He said that taking part in the work of the Disarmament Commission of the Soviet Peace Committee are representatives of the broadest sections of the Soviet public. The public hearings at the Soviet Peace Committee were addressed by more than 100 persons. On behalf of the participants in the public discussions, the Soviet Peace Committee spokesman declared for the ratification of the treaty. At the same time, he noted, attention was drawn in the course of the public hearings to the fact that despite the reliability of the verification measures envisaged by the treaty, it is necessary to see to the preservation of military parity between the USSR and the USA.

Radomir Bogdanov said that among the speakers in the debate on the treaty at the Soviet Peace Committee, many expressed serious concern over the compensation tendencies, which have become widespread among certain circles in the West. He proposed

that the funds thus released be used with peaceful aims — for combatting hunger, diseases, etc. It is proposed to use one of the platforms of the missiles to be scrapped under the INF treaty for an antiwar march from the Urals to the Atlantic, and the casing of one of the missiles for issuing souvenirs with antiwar symbols, and for Soviet and American antiwar organisations to hold joint hearings on the Treaty.

Vladimir Shenayev, member of the Soviet Committee for European Security and Co-operation, spoke next and pointed out that although the signing of the INF treaty promotes the erosion of the enemy-image in the West, West European countries were still afraid of being left without the U.S. nuclear umbrella. This is why, he continued, immediately after the ratification of the treaty it is necessary, along with working out an agreement on 50% reduction of strategic offensive armaments, to step up talks on conventional, tactical and chemical weapons which evoke special concern in Western Europe.

Sergei Shuklin, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Defence Workers' Union, said that workers of this industry welcome the signing of the treaty and urge its ratification. He pointed out that the transfer of the industrial enterprises of the defence industry to peaceful production will not lead to unemployment and wage cuts. They have already started producing high-quality goods for the national economy — specifically the Feiya washing machines, babies' prams and pasteuriser refrigerators for the agri-industrial complex.

Anatoli Ankudinov, fitter from the Votkinsk machine-building plant, said in this connection that his team had previously assembled missiles — now they turned out drilling rigs for the oil industry.

Andrei Kokoshkin, corresponding member of the USSR Academy of Sciences and Deputy Chairman of the Soviet Scientists' Committee for Peace and Against the Nuclear Threat, pointed out the importance of further advance along the road paved by the INF treaty. He said that concluding the agreement on a 50% reduction of strategic offensive armaments along with strict observance of the ABM Treaty should be the next step in this process. The Soviet scientist pointed out as well the importance of other nuclear powers' joining the disarmament process at a certain stage.

"The Soviet Union's believers hail all the practical steps to remove and lessen the risk of outbreak of nuclear war," Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk and Byelorussia said.

Filaret, who chairs the Soviet Peace Committee's public commission for liaison with

religious circles, said the global threat to the sacred gift of life on Earth that had risen in the nuclear and space age called for global decisions on the part of humanity.

It is now imperative as never before to overcome mistrust, fraught with the danger of a universal catastrophe, end senseless rivalry and pool all efforts and resources to create the most favourable conditions for greater material prosperity and spiritual perfection of human society, he said.

It is essential to do everything to remove the all-destructive danger of nuclear war and the ratification of the INF treaty will be a real step to delivering Earth from nuclear weapons, Metropolitan Filaret stressed.

Elem Klimov, First Secretary of the Board of the USSR Union of Cinema Workers, who spoke next, said motion pictures were a weapon as well, a weapon influencing public opinion and capable of achieving appreciable change in the moral atmosphere on the planet.

"The presence of nuclear arms has an effect on the psychology of people. We must put an end to this irradiation of fear and remove the sword of Damocles adversely affecting public mentality," he went on to say.

He said the cinema has responded to the subject with two warnings in the form of the U.S. picture "The Day After" and the Soviet film "Letters From a Dead Man".

The signature of the INF treaty and its subsequent ratification will help change public thinking, the Soviet film director said. The Shakespearean question "To Be or Not To Be?" in the nuclear age sounded like "To Live or Not To Live?", he added.

Klimov suggested that the practical elimination of Soviet and American medium-range and shorter-range missiles be shown to the world through a planetwide television hookup.

Andrei Gromyko's message on Rarotonga Treaty

THE Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet has ratified Protocols 2 and 3 to the Treaty on the Nuclear-free Zone in the South Pacific (Rarotonga Treaty), thereby declaring the intention of the USSR to fulfil its obligations under these protocols. Andrei Gromyko stated in a message to the heads of state of the South Pacific Forum nations in connection with the ratification.

The Soviet Union, Andrei Gromyko continued, expresses the hope that the Rarotonga Treaty will be joined by all the states grouped in the South Pacific Forum, and urges the nuclear powers that have not done this to act as guarantors of the Rarotonga Treaty after signing and ratifying the corresponding protocols to it.

Soviet Government Statement

HERE follows the text of a Soviet Government Statement —

The Treaty between the USSR and the United States on the elimination of their intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles, signed on 8 December 1987, provides also for the liquidation of Soviet OTR-22 (SS-12) shorter-range missiles which were deployed on the territory of the GDR and Czechoslovakia as reply measures to the deployment of American intermediate-range missiles in several West European countries.

Proceeding from the accord reached at the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty member states in Berlin in May 1987 the Soviet Government decided as a display of goodwill to withdraw the Soviet OTR-22 (SS-12) missiles, their launchers and corresponding auxiliary equipment from the territory of the GDR and Czechoslovakia on agreement with the governments of these countries before the INF Treaty enters into force.

The missiles will be withdrawn in February-March 1988 to the territory of the USSR to places designated in the memorandum of accord on the establishment of initial data in connection with the said Treaty.

Metropolitan David of the Georgian Orthodox Church — Live for the Sake of Peace and Justice

This Novosti booklet is available from Soviet Booklets, 3 Rosary Gardens, London, SW7 4NW (01-373 7350).

Price 50p.

Warsaw Treaty foreign ministers' meeting

THE foreign affairs ministers of the Warsaw Treaty member countries held a meeting in Prague last Tuesday.

Eduard Shevardnadze informed the meeting's participants in detail about the course and results of the talks with U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz in Moscow on 21-22 February 1988.

The heads of the delegations from the fraternal allied nations appraised the USSR's activity in the Moscow talks and expressed full support for the results attained.

They were assessed as the start of the process of preparations for the summit between Mikhail Gorbachev and U.S. President Ronald

Reagan in Moscow in the first half of the year.

The meeting's participants stressed the importance of stepping up the drafting of the treaty on reducing and limiting strategic offensive weapons, complete with all related documents, within the shortest possible period so that it can be signed during the next meeting in Moscow at the highest level.

They welcomed efforts directed at achieving accords related to the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems on the basis of the wording contained in the joint Soviet-American Statement of 10 December 1987.

The meeting's participants expressed interest in achieving progress at the Soviet-American

all-round stage-by-stage talks on the prohibition of nuclear testing and discussed problems standing in the way of accelerating the attainment of a comprehensive ban on chemical weapons, given effective verification.

They discussed the state of affairs at the Vienna follow-up meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and came out in favour of the earliest adoption of the mandate and beginning of talks on reducing armed forces and conventional armaments in Europe.

The foreign ministers stressed the need for settling regional problems by political means.

They welcomed the intention to keep on the regular Soviet-American dialogue at the highest political level and spread it to the military field.

A realistic and feasible task — *Pravda*

THE JOINT SOVIET-AMERICAN Agreement on the elimination of intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles has opened up the way to drafting an agreement on reducing strategic offensive armaments, which is now the key problem in nuclear disarmament, wrote the newspaper *Pravda* in its international review on Sunday.

In the course of the Soviet-American summit meeting in Washington, the USSR and the USA undertook the obligation to intensify their efforts to complete the treaty on cutting strategic offensive armaments while governed by the accord on compliance with the ABM Treaty and non-withdrawal from it within the dates to be agreed upon, *Pravda* continued. This obligation underlay the Soviet-American Geneva negotiations which ensued. But not much time

passed and difficulties again arose at the negotiations. The main difficulty is that the American delegation had departed from the accord reached in Washington. In any case, such was the impression, if one is to judge by the way it behaved.

The author of the review expresses the hope that now, after the Moscow negotiations between the Soviet and U.S. foreign ministers, this difficulty will be removed. The confirmation that the parties remain on the positions of the previous Washington accords is viewed by the author as an important result of the Moscow meeting. Not only the USSR but also the United States will continue to be guided by the principles on compliance with the ABM Treaty and non-withdrawal from it, the way they were agreed upon by the leaders of the two countries.

The public, not only Soviet and American but also the public of other countries, naturally want to know when the treaty on strategic offensive

armaments will be ready and signed. On that question, in the official joint Statement, the ministers reiterated the "earliest dates possible" formula adopted in December in Washington — "it is desirable for it to be signed during the next summit meeting in the first half of 1988."

"It should be noted that in the course of the Moscow negotiations, both the Soviet and American sides showed the understanding that they face a difficult but a realistic and feasible task. It is clear that strenuous efforts will be required to resolve it. And not only in Geneva — mainly at the level of the foreign ministers," *Pravda* wrote.

The Soviet-American dialogue, which began at the summit meeting in Geneva, having passed through trials in Reykjavik, having brought the first weighty results in Washington, is bound to gain in pace, approaching the new boundary — the Moscow summit.

At the Soviet-American talks in Geneva

ON Monday a plenary meeting was held in Geneva of the delegations at the Soviet-American talks on nuclear and space weapons.

The USSR delegation tabled new proposals aimed at hammering out at the earliest date a treaty on a 50% cut in the strategic offensive weapons. These proposals, which take into account in a large measure the American side's stand, concern the definition of a number of most important terms used in the treaty as well as the possibility of converting ballistic missiles into launchers for space craft.

The USSR delegation has reaffirmed the Soviet side's wish to intensify the efforts at the Geneva talks for completing work to draft a treaty on a cut in and limitation of strategic offensive weapons and on drafting the documents in connection with the latter within an agreed time.

It was also noted that characteristic of the recent meetings and talks in Moscow in the course of the visit of U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz was the mood to implement the Washington agreement at the earliest date. In that connection one cannot help being astonished at the statement made by President Ronald Reagan in an interview with the newspaper *Washington Post* on February 26 calling in question the possibility of drafting a treaty on

a 50% cut in the strategic offensive weapons of the USSR and the USA in time to make possible the signing of such a treaty during the U.S. President's visit to the USSR.

It is well known that the point at issue in the joint Soviet-American Statement of 10 December 1987 is the completion of drafting a treaty and all the documents connected with it within the shortest time possible, preferably within a time that will make possible its signing during the next Soviet-American summit meeting. The above-said statement by the U.S. President is in conflict with those understandings. During the talks with George Shultz in Moscow understanding was reached on accelerating the drafting of a treaty on strategic offensive weapons; the U.S. President's statement of February 26 in no way helps towards resolving this task.

As far as the Soviet side is concerned, it was stressed that it advocates that a treaty on a 50% cut in the strategic offensive weapons be prepared for signing by the time of the Soviet-American summit meeting in Moscow and simultaneously understanding be reached on the observance of the ABM Treaty. Conviction was expressed that it is quite possible to complete the work at Geneva by the upcoming summit meeting. The USSR delegation has urged the American side to work for the attainment of this objective by common effort.

Yuli Vorontsov on Iran-Iraq conflict

"THE Iran-Iraq conflict has been dragging on beyond all measure. It is now entangled in the recriminations of the two conflicting sides," said Yuli Vorontsov, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, appearing in the Soviet "Ninth Studio" television programme on Saturday.

"When I visited those countries," he went on to say, "I found out, to my surprise, that this was still a border conflict to them. If this is what they think, it is the more essential to bring it to an end. The pointlessness of hostilities is now clear to everyone. Therefore, what is needed is an active policy of convincing the two conflicting sides that they can end the conflict and bring their disputes, resentment, and all grievances to the negotiating table. The international community is ready to help them resolve their disputes. In other words, there is an opportunity to bring the conflict, and in point of fact the terrible war, to an end on conditions honourable to both sides."

"Iraq and Iran have taken up different attitudes to this. But further work of the United Nations Organisation and the U.N. Security Council to persuade both sides to negotiate should yield results. We are absolutely convinced that there is no other way speedily to end the conflict except through the agency of the United Nations' influence on the two countries."

At the USSR Foreign Affairs Ministry

Balkan foreign ministers' Conference

"THE Soviet Union highly values the political potential of the Balkan countries, their active actions in favour of peace, universal security and in the interests of building the common European home," Gennadi Gerasimov, head of the USSR Foreign Ministry information directorate, emphasised at a briefing yesterday, commenting on the results of the recent Belgrade Conference of the Balkan foreign ministers.

"Judging by the reports coming in, the Conference participants positively assess the results of the meeting of the foreign ministers of the Balkan countries and the growing mutual understanding between the region's states," he noted.

INF Treaty

"According to incoming reports, a NATO council session opening in Brussels today at the level of heads of state and government will discuss issues of security following the signing of the Soviet-U.S. Treaty on eliminating intermediate- and shorter-range missiles, and the future line towards our country and its allies," Gennadi Gerasimov, head of the USSR Foreign Ministry information directorate, said at yesterday's briefing in Moscow.

He noted that Western leaders held divergent views on this line — some of them stand for a sober and realistic approach, for further positive movement ahead relying on what has been achieved. Tributes to the past, to confrontational rhetoric are seen in statements by others.

"The Soviet side holds," the USSR Foreign Ministry spokesman went on, "that the signing of the INF Treaty opens up good prospects for the beginning of a fundamentally new stage in international relations. This Treaty is important in itself as a measure for disarmament, as a step in scaling down military confrontation.

Simultaneously, it paves the way towards new accords — towards reducing and curbing strategic offensive armaments given the preservation of the ABM Treaty in the form in which it was signed in 1972 and non-withdrawal from it during the agreed-upon time-frame, towards reducing the armed forces and conventional armaments in Europe and towards other important measures for disarmament. We have also presented respective proposals both on a bilateral and multilateral basis."

"It is in the interests of Europe, in the interests of peace to look forward rather than to turn one's back on the future," Gerasimov stressed. "It is the moment now to test politicians' ability to display a responsible approach. The people of Europe, to whom a historic chance for a dramatic improvement of the political climate is opening up, are justified in hoping for this."

Visit to Saudi Arabia

"My trip to Saudi Arabia has been the first visit by a Soviet official to that country in the past fifty years," Vladimir Polyakov, head of the Middle East and North Africa Directorate at the USSR Foreign Ministry, told last Wednesday's briefing.

The Saudi side, Polyakov said, seemed to have appreciated my mission conveying a verbal message from Mikhail Gorbachev to the Saudi King.

The message was conveyed to the Crown Prince, First Deputy Prime Minister and Commander of the National Guard, Abdullah Ibn Abdul Aziz al-Saud.

A very interesting conversation was held. It passed in an atmosphere of goodwill and mutual respect.

The Foreign Ministry official observed that meetings had also been held with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal. In the meetings the sides had a thorough exchange of views on all issues of mutual interest.

Gorbachev's verbal message singled out three issues, Polyakov noted. They were — Middle East settlement and convocation of the inter-

national conference, Iran-Iraq war, and Afghanistan.

The Saudi leadership welcomed the USSR's February 9 political decision on the timetable for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. "As we understand it," Polyakov noted, "Saudi Arabia also favours the earliest conclusion of the Afghan-Pakistani agreements in Geneva."

Saudi Arabia, like the Soviet Union, resolutely backs international efforts at implementing Resolution 598 of the U.N. Security Council which contains a well-considered platform for ending the Iran-Iraq war and settling the conflict by political means.

The Saudi leaders clearly and unequivocally came out in support of the earliest convocation of the international conference on the Middle East with a view to attaining universal settlement..

They emphasised that one could speak of a fair and lasting peace in the Middle East only on condition of the Palestinian people exercising their right to national self-determination.

"The recent trip to convey Mikhail Gorbachev's verbal message showed that contacts and political dialogue on all issues of mutual interest are developing," Polyakov stressed in conclusion.

South Atlantic

Our view is that large-scale military exercises which Great Britain plans to hold in the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands in March, run counter to the interests of the normalisation of the situation in the South Atlantic. They contradict the peaceful aspirations of Latin American countries and appropriate decisions of the United Nations General Assembly, and do not suit the aim of creating a zone of peace and cooperation in the region, Gennadi Gerasimov said at a USSR Foreign Ministry briefing last Wednesday.

"The Soviet Union's principled stand is in favour of an early settlement of the problem of the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands and holds that this can be achieved through serious talks between Argentina and Britain on the basis of the United Nations Charter and appropriate resolutions of the General Assembly."

USSR Foreign Affairs Ministry protest

THE Soviet Foreign Ministry on Monday declared a strong protest to the U.S. Embassy in Moscow over the dramatically increased subversive thrust of broadcasts to the Soviet Union lately of the U.S. Government-run radio service *Voice of America*.

Among other things, these broadcasts have been crudely distorting historical facts, making provocative insinuations about the growth of nationalist sentiment in the Baltic republics of the Soviet Union and expressing U.S. support for forces that do not accept the social system in this country.

The broadcasts can only be described as flagrant interference in the domestic affairs of these republics and the Soviet Union and as hostile action aiming to undermine the friendship of the peoples of the Soviet Union and its national-state arrangement.

They have been obviously at odds with the spirit of understandings reached in December 1987 in Washington during the Soviet-U.S. summit there and directed at putting right and steadily improving relations between the two countries.

The contents of the broadcasts have aroused the profound indignation of the Letts,

Lithuanians, Estonians and all other Soviet people. This has been vividly demonstrated by their speeches at protest rallies and statements in the press. Special resentment has been caused in the Soviet Union by the V.O.A.'s blatant attempts, in particular in its broadcasts on February 22 and February 23, to present the policies of perestroika, glasnost and democratisation pursued in the USSR in a bad light.

Expressing the wishes of voters and their demands for an end to the undisguised provocations, the Supreme Soviets of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia have adopted statements of protest over the gross U.S. meddling in the internal affairs of the sovereign republics, which is a serious breach of the U.N. Charter, the Helsinki Final Act and norms of international law.

The Soviet Foreign Ministry, protesting strongly over these V.O.A. broadcasts, noted that such broadcasts contradict the goal of preventing confrontation and facilitating more stable relations between the USSR and the USA.

The United States, where the rights of national minorities are flouted so arrogantly and where racism and discrimination against the indigenous population are rampant, is in no position to teach democracy and harmonious relations between nationalities to other nations.

USSR-U.S. SUMMIT

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Chingiz Aitmatov addresses Moscow cultural symposium

"THE call of our complex and contradictory times is to activate the creative energies of the peoples of various countries and to utilise the achievements of world culture on a large scale in the name of peace, mutual understanding and spiritual drawing together," stated prominent Soviet writer Chingiz Aitmatov.

He spoke on Saturday at an international symposium on the role of creative intellectuals in the accomplishment of the tasks of the U.N.-designated world decade for cultural development (1988-1997). The symposium is being held in Moscow under UNESCO auspices.

Aitmatov described the U.N. action as unique in scope and timely in the highest degree. "It is possible to build harmonious international relations in all spheres of life on the basis of high cultural standards and ethical principles," he

pointed out.

The participants in the symposium — prominent men of letters, scientists, art people, and representatives of various public organisations — voiced their views on the new initiative of UNESCO, and made a number of specific proposals concerning its practical realisation.

Cooperation in the field of culture is an effective instrument in the anti-war movement of peoples. This idea expressed by Honig Zierrock, a musician and public figure from the Federal Republic of Germany, was supported by Czechoslovak writer Bohumil Grabal.

It was pointed out at the symposium that the development of science and technology is now getting ahead of the ethical development of man and that therefore UNESCO's new action whose aim is to raise the cultural level and spiritual potential of man is all the more topical.

Academician Sergei Tikhvinsky, a Soviet historian, came forward with the idea of working out under UNESCO's guidance several international programmes dealing with the development of human civilisation.

The participants in the symposium spoke of the need to give greater scope to exchanges of art values. It was proposed to organise several big exhibitions of the works of outstanding personalities in the field of art from all continents within the framework of the cultural development decade.

Soviet and U.S. publishers cooperate

"THE week which we spent in Moscow was very fruitful — together with Soviet colleagues we have mapped out an extensive programme for co-operation." This is how Dr Kenneth Ford, Executive Director of the American Physics Institute Publishing Society, summed up the results of his trip to the Soviet capital.

On Saturday he signed an agreement on cooperation with the Soviet Copyright Agency (VAAP) for 1988-1992. It envisages the publication of nineteen Soviet technical journals in English translation.

Researches being conducted by Soviet scientists, particularly in the fields of physics, mathematics, astronomy and other natural sciences are world-known. Much interest in them is being shown in the United States and we try to satisfy the interest as fully as possible. Kenneth Ford pointed out.

He said his society has reached agreement with Moscow's Mir publishing house to issue a number of publications of a scientific nature.

During the talks with Soviet colleagues we suggested holding meetings of scientists — authors of articles published in Soviet and American journals — in the United States and the Soviet Union alternately. Such meetings will undoubtedly be of benefit not only from the scientific point of view. They will promote stronger personal contacts, which is highly important in our turbulent age. Kenneth Ford emphasised in conclusion.

More and more American publishers are offering to cooperate with VAAP of late. At present the Soviet copyright agency maintains contacts with more than a hundred U.S. publishing firms.

Joint industrial enterprises in the USSR

TWENTY-NINE joint industrial enterprises with the participation of foreign partners have been registered in the USSR. Some of them have already started their production activities. The first consignments of goods have been produced. This was reported at a two-day conference on February 26-27 of directors of joint industrial enterprises established in the USSR.

Joint ventures, as all the new undertakings, are coming up against numerous difficulties, participants in the conference pointed out. During the short period of time that has passed since adoption of the laws paving the way to the creation of joint enterprises in the USSR they have proved their economic effectiveness and flexibility and achieved high labour productivity.

At the same time, participants in the conference emphasised that the working out of new legal regulations sometimes did not keep up with the development of new forms of economic activity. Effective ways of maintaining relations

between joint enterprises and various organisations and local government bodies have not been fully developed so far. Joint enterprises often face the situation where workers of state and economic management bodies do not understand the new flexible economic principles determining their activities and try to strictly regulate their work with the help of numerous instructions.

In these conditions the coordination of actions of the Soviet executives heading the joint enterprises acquire special importance. With this in view they set up a Directors' Council. Lev Vainberg, Director of the Soviet-Italian-French enterprise Interquadro, was elected its chairman.

The Council will coordinate actions by the Soviet heads of joint ventures on problems of mutual interest such as legal matters, material and equipment supplies, social conditions and amenities for personnel, etc.

The Council will meet twice a year. Its next session will be on May 24-25, 1988.

A draft statute is to be drawn up for the Council by that time and the possibility examined of establishing an Association of joint ventures in the USSR.

Academician Abalkin on the USSR economy

THE new system of economic management in the USSR based on cost-accounting and self-financing of enterprises will start yielding marked results not earlier than the beginning of the nineties, holds Academician Leonid Abalkin, Director of the Institute of Economics of the USSR Academy of Sciences. Writing in *Izvestia* on Monday, he notes that a substantial increase in the efficiency of the economy will be achieved after the transition to a comprehensive system is made. Besides the regime of cost-accounting and self-financing, it requires the completion of the price reform, reconstruction of the financial-crediting system and passing onto a wholesale system of trade in means of production.

The scientist pointed out the difficulties of introducing novelties into the economy. One of these difficulties results from the fact that production plans for enterprises set at a higher

level are of an obligatory nature. The state contracts quite often take up the entire production programme. This means that due conditions for the enterprise and initiative of work collectives are not always present.

The Academician said that economists pin great hopes on a new fundamental document — the regulations concerning state contracts — that is being drafted now. It should stipulate all the rights of enterprises in getting such contracts and should determine the maximum scopes of contracts and also the reasons for which a work collective might refuse a contract (as, for instance, when the question of material supply is not resolved).

Among other difficulties of economic development, Academician Abalkin mentioned the existing contradiction between the Law on the State Enterprise, that guarantees an enterprise the independence of its actions, and the rights that the ministry has now. This contradiction should be removed in the drafting of new regulations on the ministry.

"I believe it will take approximately three years for the bulk of enterprises to adopt the new system of economic management. Over this period a transition should be made from separate steps to a new integrated system of economic management," Leonid Abalkin pointed out.