

Mikhail Gorbachev's speech at collective farmer's Congress

THE MOST important mission of the 4th National Congress of Collective Farmers, Mikhail Gorbachev said at its opening session in the Kremlin on March 23, is to "make a real contribution to realising the potential of socialism, use it to improve people's lives and develop their aptitudes."

The General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee said that the first three years of perestroika (restructuring) efforts in the country have not gone for nothing, although "there have proved to be more difficulties than originally expected."

He noted that priority attention has begun to be paid to developing the material basis of the social sphere and decisions have been taken to overhaul the education system and medical services.

A package of interrelated strategic measures to drastically update every aspect of life in Soviet society has been worked out and is being consistently translated into reality. Radical economic reform is being carried out.

The Communist Party has firmly adopted the policy of democratising public and political affairs in every way. The Law on State Enterprises has taken effect, giving the shop-floor broad rights in production management. A draft law on co-operatives has been offered for nationwide discussion.

Achieving the purposes of perestroika "will take much time and effort, but one can already make the legitimate conclusion that the Party and the people have, by and large, been able to reverse the pre-crisis trends in society and shift it to the track of profound revolutionary change," Gorbachev said.

"This," he stressed, "is the principal political conclusion of the past three years."

The Soviet leader expressed the conviction that the nation will be able to attain all the goals of perestroika. "This is warranted by the popular backing and the increasing cohesion of working people round the objectives and tasks of perestroika."

Gorbachev said the thrust of the revolutionary innovative work associated with perestroika is "first of all in unswathing popular activity, promoting creative attitudes and prowess, and drawing everyone into managing the affairs of society."

The General Secretary then spoke of the history of the co-operative movement in the Soviet Union and analysed achievements and mistakes. He said it is vital today "to read Lenin

afresh and anew, delving into the depths of his thinking on ways of building a new society."

This, he added, concerns the teaching on socialist co-ops as well.

Gorbachev said in this connection that at the first stage in Soviet history "the realisation of Lenin's teaching on co-operatives yielded tangible results," but it has subsequently been seriously watered down and co-ops have been turned into "junior partners" of the state sector.

The Soviet leader told the congress delegates, who represent the nation's collective farms, or agricultural co-operatives, that the co-op movement "can and should play an important role in modern society."

"We should revive co-ops not in their old, often too primitive forms, but in the form of a modern, high-standard co-operative movement extensively integrated both within its own framework and with government-run enterprises and organisations," he said.

Gorbachev said that over the past year alone nearly 14,000 co-operatives have sprung up in the manufacture of consumer goods, waste recycling, the trading sector, public catering and the services.

There are now over 150,000 people involved in co-operative projects and co-op arrangements have lately begun to be successfully employed at government-operated enterprises as well, mostly in their hitherto low-profit or loss-making operations, Gorbachev said.

He mentioned also negative phenomena in the co-op movement, for example cases where co-operatives take advantage of their scarcity to boost their profits by jacking up prices.

The growth of the co-operative movement, Gorbachev said, has been seriously held back by inadequate legislation regulating this kind of venture.

This hindrance, however, will be removed, he
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Mikhail Gorbachev's reply to French war veterans

HERE follows the full text of a message sent by Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, in reply to an address from the National Council of the French Republican Association of Veterans and Victims of War, the leading progressive veterans' organisation in France:

Dear friends,

It is with satisfaction that I accept your high opinion of the treaty on intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles. It is indeed the first step to real disarmament.

Just like you, the Soviet people are for expediting the process of general disarmament by ratifying this treaty. It is only by proceeding along this path that humanity's survival can be ensured.

A special role in accomplishing this historic task belongs to Europe with its political culture, possibilities, authority and dramatic experience of devastating wars. War veterans, you know this well.

You may rest assured that we shall do everything depending on us to come to a world without weapons, without violence and without wars. This is the primary aim of the Soviet Union's foreign policy.

It is our deep conviction that the "nuclear deterrence" concept and the policy of modernising and building up the nuclear potential based on it do not only belong to yesterday, but cross out tomorrow.

We share your hopes for an early conclusion of a treaty for halving the strategic offensive arms of the USSR and the United States on condition, of course, that weapons will be kept out of space.

It is time, and ever more urgent, to begin serious talks on the reduction of conventional armaments and armed forces in Europe. There is a real possibility as early as this year to

sign a convention for banning and destroying chemical weapons.

The Soviet Union supports the idea of creating a corridor and zones free from weapons of mass destruction and from offensive weapons systems and zones of mutual trust — in the north and central part of our continent, in the Balkans, and in the Mediterranean.

It is for demilitarising the "common European home" to the maximum possible degree.

We hope that West European states, including France, will join in efforts in this direction.

The founder of your organisation, Henri Barbusse, devoted his life to realising the idea of peace among nations.

I wish you success with continuing the noble international cause started by the celebrated humanist writer.

* * *

The National Council of the Republican Association of Veterans and Victims of War has sent addresses to Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan as well as to François Mitterand, hailing the Soviet-American treaty on the abolition of intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles, expressing satisfaction with the first adopted specific measures to reduce these kinds of nuclear weapons and voicing the hope for positive results at the Soviet-US talks on strategic arms.

Those messages urged the leaders of the USSR and the United States to speed up the process of disarmament, up to and including the complete destruction of nuclear, chemical, biological and conventional weapons as the only measure that can ensure humanity's survival.

The association declared its firm intention to carry on the campaign for France to embark decisively on the path of disarmament and peace as well.

Calling for the dissolution of military blocs, the association stressed that the independence and security of France, as well as other countries, cannot be gained today through the arms race and the forging of military axes. □

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Mikhail Gorbachev's meeting with Alessandro Natta

A MEETING between Mikhail Gorbachev and Alessandro Natta, General Secretary of the Italian Communist Party, took place at the CPSU Central Committee on March 29. Taking part in the meeting were Alexander Yakovlev, Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, Anatoli Dobrynin, Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, Giorgio Napolitano and Antonio Rubbi, members of the leadership of the Italian Communist Party, Vadim Zagladin and Anatoli Chernyayev, members of the CPSU Central Committee, and Renato Sandri, member of the Central Committee of the Italian Communist Party.

Mutual satisfaction was expressed over the nature of relations between the CPSU and the Italian Communist Party — friendly, equal, open, respectful relations.

The most important problems of the present were discussed during the conversation that lasted nearly six hours.

Special attention was devoted to the problems of relaxation of tension and co-operation in Europe between NATO and Warsaw Treaty countries, between EEC and CMEA.

Gorbachev noted that "we don't look at processes of integration in Western Europe only in a critical way, we see all their aspects. Our fears are linked only to the attempts to militarise these processes, which is fraught with a new spiral of the arms race."

Mindful of the natural character of differences in Europe in the positions both in the two communities and individual states, the CPSU and the Italian Communist Party emphasised the importance of talks on problems of reducing conventional armaments and armed forces and control over that process, which should have a positive influence on the defensive policy of the two sides as well.

Gorbachev informed Natta about the results of another round of the Vienna talks, pointing to certain positive changes which made one hope that practical results would be achieved already this year.

Gorbachev and Natta favoured the development of fruitful dialogue and more active co-operation in all areas between East and West.

With a view to deepening the knowledge of these subjects, the leaders of the two parties agreed to set up a mixed research group which would be open for participation to other European political forces.

"Our Party's and country's attitudes to Europe, to European problems," Gorbachev said, "are determined by the fact that we consider ourselves, above all, Europeans."

"When we talk about the 'common European home', we proceed from the view that all the objectively formed distinctions between separate countries or their groups are preserved in that 'home'. But observing all these distinctions, we realise that the whole of Europe is linked by historic, cultural, economic, scientific and technological factors. We are all linked by the common destiny.

"Bearing in mind the discussion of the sum total of European problems we proposed to hold a 'Round Table' conference," Mikhail Gorbachev said. "Forces of different ideological

orientation, comprising the entire political spectrum of Europe can take part in the conference. The viewpoints will differ very much but it will be necessary to seek out the common things in them, to work out compromises. This is a normal, moreover, a necessary process. The holding of the 'Round Table' conference could give a serious impetus to thoughts about the destinies and prospects of entire Europe."

At the request of the Italian comrades, Mikhail Gorbachev summed up the transformations in Soviet society over the period of perestroika, described the process of the Party's working out the theory of perestroika and transforming its policy, spoke about how the concept symbolised by the slogan 'more socialism — more democracy' was shaped.

"We have drawn conclusions from the past. We have taken into consideration the fact that the attempts at reforms made earlier proved unsuccessful for the reason that they were half-way, partial, incomplete, have not envisaged active involvement of the masses. We now aim at drawing virtually the entire society in the implementation of perestroika.

"The processes of perestroika are gaining momentum. People hold their heads higher. We learn to live in conditions of widening democracy, glasnost. Sometimes this gives rise to doubts in some people. Certain persons ask: is not socialism disintegrating? But what kind of socialism? If dogmatic, bureaucratic socialism is meant then it is disintegrating, indeed. Meanwhile creative socialism, socialism based on genuine Leninist ideas, the system in which the working people have the say in developing rather than disintegrating.

"We observe a strange picture now: internal opponents of perestroika and its external adversaries are as if merge forces. Both categories try to sow doubt, but we are not disturbed by this. We know exactly that we must move onward, and onward only. The alternative to perestroika is stagnation, crisis, to say nothing of the destiny of socialism.

"Our task is to resolve the most complex problems, to ensure the possibility of the closest rallying of society and not to divide it. We shall be deciding all the problems in a democratic way, together with the people. We shall be acting together with the working people. We have clearly determined the principle with the beginning of perestroika that everything is started with the Party. The Party has realised the need for radical changes and advanced the policy of perestroika. We know now that it is dangerous to lag behind the processes of social development.

"Already now, during perestroika, once one comes to lag behind in something or omit something, confusion begins. We are also confident in something else: the Party should not evade the most difficult questions, including those connected with our history which has become the object of ideological struggle not only to us but to fraternal parties as well."

Mikhail Gorbachev touched upon plans connected with the forthcoming 19th All-Union Party Conference, and emphasised the role which it should play in deepening the processes of restructuring and in critically evaluating what has been done and in adjusting what did not justify itself. "The CPSU is fully resolved to perform the role of the political vanguard of society while controlling and managerial functions should be performed by other bodies and first of all by the soviets of people's deputies. The soviets are a great achievement of our revolution, of the people themselves, but

new life should be breathed into them. Matters concerning the democratisation of the entire society and inner-Party democracy will be thoroughly considered at the conference".

Alessandro Natta pointed out the lively interest and wholehearted positive appraisal by Italian Communists who attentively follow the efforts to revitalise Soviet society and the international policy of the USSR.

"Further development of these efforts towards genuine democratisation in all spheres", the PCI General Secretary emphasised, "will be able to make an important contribution to new evaluation of international relations. This is why these efforts are regarded positively not only by the Italian communists, despite the specificity of their experience and their concept, but also, in the PCI's view, by broad sections of people and democratic forces throughout Europe".

Matters aimed at settling regional conflicts, first of all the one in the Middle East, were discussed. Mikhail Gorbachev emphasised that "having analysed the history and dramatic experience of these conflicts, we have come to the conclusion that they cannot be stopped militarily".

"Political methods are needed. As far as the Middle East is concerned, we, just like the majority of states, see a way out in convening an international conference within the framework of which most diverse multilateral and bilateral talks can be held. However, a genuine settlement is unattainable without a just solution to the Palestinian problem or without participation of representatives of the Palestinian people. A way towards restoration of normal relations between the Soviet Union and Israel will also be found within the framework of preparation and holding of such a conference."

"We are prepared constructively to co-operate, with the Americans, too. We now ponder over the results of talks on this issue between Eduard Shevardnadze and George Shultz."

The Afghan issue was touched upon. Mikhail Gorbachev spoke of the state of affairs at the talks in Geneva, and stated the determination of the Soviet leaders to carry the matter through.

In conclusion Mikhail Gorbachev and Alessandro Natta expressed deep satisfaction with the dialogue, its contents, the atmosphere, and the spirit of mutual respect by which it was characterised, and expressed an intention constructively to continue to develop it.

Mikhail Gorbachev asked Alessandro Natta to convey his cordial greetings to the Italian Communists and working people, and confirmed his intention to visit Italy. Alessandro Natta expressed wholehearted wish of success to the CPSU in the implementation of perestroika. □

Mikhail Gorbachev To Deepen Restructuring by Practical Deeds

Meeting at the CPSU Central Committee
with leading representatives of the mass
media and unions of cultural and art workers

July 14, 1987

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

Price 40p.

Eduard Shevardnadze's meeting with President Reagan

EDUARD SHEVARDNADZE, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee and USSR Foreign Minister, met Ronald Reagan, President of the USA, in the White House on March 23.

Eduard Shevardnadze conveyed to the President greetings from the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee Mikhail Gorbachev.

During the conversation that ensued, the Soviet side thoroughly analysed the state of affairs on key aspects in Soviet-American relations, above all in the area of security where the sides have already accumulated quite rich experience of talks. The opinion was specifically expressed that, given truly mutual striving and the high dynamism of the talks, work on a treaty for a 50 per cent cut in strategic offensive arms of the USSR and the USA could be concluded successfully, and within a relatively short period of time, preferably by the coming Soviet-American summit in Moscow. On the whole a solid basis has already been created for this. It stands to reason that this will become possible if there is an agreement that would commit the sides to observe the ABM Treaty, as signed in 1972, and not to withdraw from it for a specified period of time, the USSR Foreign Minister noted. The sides have already agreed to decide that matter on the basis of the wording contained in the joint Soviet-US summit statement adopted in Washington in December

last. The point now is to implement that arrangement. This is one of the central matters at the ministers' talks.

The Soviet minister proposed to the US side to tackle resolutely the complex matters that remain unresolved.

Other aspects of the problem of arms limitation and disarmament, including the banning of chemical weapons, ending of nuclear tests, reduction of conventional armaments, were touched upon. On the whole, an intensive dialogue between the USSR and the USA on an entire range of matters of security creates good conditions for the consolidation of Soviet-American relations on positions of co-operation in averting the military menace, of progress on the road to creating a comprehensive system of international security, Eduard Shevardnadze said.

Eduard Shevardnadze dwelt further on the most topical problems of the international situation from the viewpoint of resolving conflict situations in various areas of the world. In this context he set out the Soviet Union's constructive realistic approaches to the settlement around Afghanistan, to the solution of the Middle East problem, an end to the Iran-Iraq war and to other regional problems. The achievement of a higher level of mutual understanding between the USSR and the USA in the quest for practical ways of eliminating "hot spots" and seats of tension causing the danger of unpredictable developments would promote a just solution of these problems.

The Soviet side expressed readiness for further concrete steps for the development of bilateral relations and exchanges with the USA. Responding to the President's request, Eduard Shevardnadze described the course of the all-round restructuring of the life of Soviet society, highlighting the international importance of the processes in the USSR whose peaceful, constructive tendency determines the Soviet Union's entire foreign policy course.

President Reagan set out US evaluations of the questions raised in the conversation. He confirmed the intention of his Administration to continue joint work to find mutually-acceptable solutions to the main problems in relations between the USA and the USSR, above all in questions of security. The United States is striving to implement arrangements reached to this effect during the Washington summit.

The timing of Ronald Reagan's coming visit to the USSR was agreed upon during the conversation — from May 29 to June 2, 1988. The President of the United States asked that best wishes be conveyed to Mikhail Gorbachev.

Taking part in the conversation were US Vice-President George Bush, US Secretary of State George Shultz, Defense Secretary Frank Carlucci, USSR Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Bessmertnykh, USSR Ambassador to the USA Yuri Dubinin, assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Colin Powell and Chief of Staff to the President Howard Baker.

Joint Soviet-American Statement

A JOINT Soviet-American statement was adopted on the results of the meetings and talks which the USSR Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze had in Washington:

Eduard Shevardnadze, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR and George Shultz, Secretary of State of the United States met in Washington from March 21 to 23, 1988, for the second of a series of meetings to review developments in Soviet-US relations and to prepare for the meeting between Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee and Ronald Reagan, President of the United States, which will take place in Moscow from May 29 to June 2, 1988.

Eduard Shevardnadze was received by President Ronald Reagan for a discussion of the state of Soviet-American relations and of objectives in the coming months in arms control, human rights and humanitarian questions, regional affairs, and bilateral matters.

The two sides gave priority attention to implementation of the agreements and understandings recorded in the joint statement issued by the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee Mikhail Gorbachev and the President of the United States Ronald Reagan in their Washington meeting, as developed further during Secretary Shultz's visit to Moscow in February 1988. Both sides have worked hard and some progress has been realised in a number of areas, but much more needs to be done.

By mutual desire, the meetings between the Foreign Minister and the Secretary began with a frank and business-like exchange on human rights and humanitarian questions. The discus-

sion of these issues will continue at the expert level.

The Foreign Minister and the Secretary and their senior experts held extensive discussions on arms control.

They reaffirmed the strong commitment made in the Washington summit joint statement to make an intensive effort to complete a treaty on the reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms and all integral documents at the earliest possible date, preferably in time for signature of the treaty during the next meeting of the two leaders. The ministers reviewed the joint draft texts of a protocol on inspection; a protocol on conversion or elimination of strategic offensive arms; and a memorandum of understanding, developed in accordance with their directive at the February ministerial meeting in Moscow. Re-emphasising their commitment to effective verification measures, they agreed that the Soviet and US negotiators in Geneva will seek to resolve the remaining differences in these documents and report on progress at the next ministerial meeting.

The ministers continued their review of the key remaining substantive issues associated with the treaty, as well as a wide range of treaty topics of interest to each side, including problems associated with: verification and counting of nuclear-armed long-range air-launched cruise missiles; limitation and verification of nuclear-armed long-range sea-launched cruise missiles; and mobile ICBMs. They also reviewed issues related to sub-limits on warheads within the 6000 level.

Eduard Shevardnadze and George Shultz also reviewed the progress at the nuclear and space talks on the negotiations regarding the ABM Treaty as discussed at the Washington summit. They directed their negotiators in Geneva to

expedite preparation of a joint draft text of a separate agreement building on the language of the December 10, 1987 joint statement issued by the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee Mikhail Gorbachev and the President of the United States Ronald Reagan, allowing consideration of any unresolved issues at the next meeting of the Foreign Minister and the Secretary of State in Moscow.

Taking note of further progress in Soviet-US full-scale step-by-step negotiations on issues of nuclear testing and confirming the commitment by the sides to the implementation of the agreed mandate of these negotiations, the ministers instructed their delegations in Geneva, in particular:

To design and conduct as soon as possible the joint verification experiment in full conformity with the December 9, 1987 ministerial statement:

Complete a detailed plan and schedule for the joint verification experiment by the April ministerial meeting; prepare a joint draft of the threshold test ban treaty protocol by the time of the joint verification experiment, to be finalised through the conduct and analysis of the joint verification experiment;

Accelerate work on verification issues for the peaceful nuclear explosions treaty.

The two sides reviewed the situation on conventional arms control, with special reference to the mandate negotiations in Vienna, and expressed the hope for their completion in the context of a successful outcome of the Vienna CSCE meeting.

The ministers discussed the ongoing multilateral and bilateral negotiations toward a comprehensive, effectively verifiable and truly global ban on chemical weapons, and instructed

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Soviet Foreign Minister's Washington Press Conference

EDUARD SHEVARDNAZDE, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee and Foreign Minister of the USSR, held a press conference at the Soviet Embassy in Washington on March 23, following conclusion of the talks in the American capital.

As you already know, said Eduard Shevardnadze, a few hours ago on the basis of instructions from General Secretary Gorbachev, we have agreed with President Reagan the dates of his visit to the Soviet Union. Moscow is awaiting the President of the United States of America at the end of May. This is a good time of the year for the fourth summit meeting between the leaders of our two countries in two years.

This is a good time of the year for the next radical step in renewing Soviet-American relations on the basis of dialogue and constructive co-operation. This is indeed a good time of the year to take a fresh look on the roads travelled by mankind, and to abandon those roads that lead to confrontation in the arms race and heightened international tensions.

All summit meetings that have taken place within the period that in our country we call the time of perestroika and new thinking, have become landmark events in Soviet-US relations. The forthcoming meeting in Moscow will be a logical continuation in the course that has begun in Geneva, that continued in Reykjavik and Washington. I believe that our common task, our common concern and goal should be to make the US President's visit to Moscow as productive as was Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to Washington.

And this is why we meet every month, myself and Secretary Shultz, and this, by the way, is our 23rd meeting over the last two and a half years, and we alternate visits between Washington and Moscow. And you can logically ask what the results of those meetings are. But before describing those results, including the results of this meeting, I would like to make a remark of a more general philosophical nature.

The meeting in December was marked by the treaty eliminating an entire class of weapons, and we want the Moscow summit meeting to be crowned by the agreement on the 50 per cent reduction in strategic offensive arms. But however enormous these achievements of political intellect are in and of themselves, I think that the meeting goes far beyond the fact that they removed from the arsenals of death enormous quantities of nuclear weapons.

The most important meaning of those summit meetings and of the decisions taken there is that, as we see it, they shape a new quality of our relations, which can create a new nature of overall international relations.

Being the product of new thinking, they create new political and socio-psychological realities of the world. If you look at the current situation in a fresh way, then it will immediately become obvious how far from normal this current situation is. Let us look at the relationship between nuclear arms and man. Nuclear arms are necessary for the defense of man, as individual, as representative, and as a continuator of the human race. But at the same time, it is clear today that those nuclear arms threaten man with physical destruction, economic impoverishment, and moral and spiritual degradation.

And therefore, nuclear disarmament is acquiring increasingly an indisputable human dimension which can no longer be ignored. I feel that the meetings between Mikhail Gorbachev

and Ronald Reagan increasingly affect this main parameter in an increasingly profound and broad way. And it is quite natural that his human dimension becomes the link that relates together the problems of disarmament with regional conflicts, human rights and bilateral relations.

At these negotiations with the Secretary of State, we have again discussed the entire spectrum of those problems. Overall, we can say that on each of those problems, there is some movement. There is a step forward. Although those have not been very big steps, each of those steps makes it evident that there is a greater understanding where to move and on what to focus our efforts.

For example, discussing humanitarian questions, and we began the dialogue with the President, and also with the secretary of state with those questions of humanitarian nature, we have been able to note that those discussions have become increasingly constructive. And we have agreed that we should discontinue an extremely critical manner of conversation on these matters, that we should abandon this accusatory and denouncing manner of talk on those questions.

In addition to recording facts and events, which are of some concern to each of the two sides, it is necessary also to note positive trends that emerge in the life of our countries and to consider positive experience, for example, the practice of improving legislation in the sphere of human rights and meeting the spiritual and material demands of people.

Discussions of human rights and all aspects of humanitarian co-operation will continue in a special group of experts, which will remain here and will continue discussions after our departure. We can expect that a special group representing the legislatures of our two countries will be established soon. And I would like to say that this idea emerged in Washington during the meeting between Mikhail Gorbachev and President Reagan.

So on this avenue of Soviet-US relations, direct movement both ways is becoming more intense.

Of course, for us, of special interest are questions related to an agreement on strategic offensive arms in the context of compliance with the ABM Treaty.

Let me make one remark in this connection. We and the Secretary of State Shultz work on the basis of a clear mandate from our leaders, who have instructed us to prepare not just a new agreement, but a good, verifiable and viable document, a treaty on strategic offensive arms.

We fully agree with those who say that the groundwork for a major reduction in long-range arms should be well prepared. And therefore, we give major attention to bringing closer together the conceptual approaches of the two sides to finding a place and a meaning for each detail of the future treaty. Does this remark conceal a lack of real progress? Let me give you an example by way of an answer.

A conceptual outline for a mechanism of verification for long-range sea-launched cruise missiles has now emerged. As you know, this question is one of the most difficult ones. Some people say that sea-launched cruise missiles cannot be verified. We say that they can be, if those missiles are made verifiable. And many methods can be used for that — a set of methods, such as establishing quantitative limitations, remote monitoring of nuclear missiles on ships, and verification in the locations where submarines and surface ships are armed with missiles. The US side has found those ideas

interesting, and it has agreed that a combination of several methods of verification does, in principle, make it possible to find a solution in this different problem, too.

Similar package solutions have been prepared for air-launched cruise missiles and mobile ICBMs. I think it is possible to find a key for a solution of the problem of counting rule of heavy bombers equipped with cruise missiles.

Overall, the situation now enables us to hope that at the April round of negotiations in Moscow, we will be able to find mutually acceptable solutions on a number of major questions. We have had a generally good discussion of the problem of the prohibition of chemical weapons. As recently agreed, we have handed to the US side a draft statement on the prohibition of chemical weapons which our leaders could make at their meeting in Moscow.

Of course, not everything was smooth and peaceful during our discussions. We did not expect that that would be so. There were, and there are some differences, but almost all of those differences are business-like, and almost all of them are free from propaganda admixtures. But there were some exceptions, too. I will not remind you of the numerous loud speeches in the West about alleged Soviet superiority in conventional arms. There have been so many appeals to link further reductions in nuclear arms with the elimination of imbalances in conventional arms. This was particularly emphasised at the recent NATO session in Brussels.

Let me remind you that at the recent meeting between the Soviet and American ministers of defence in Berne, General Dmitri Yazov spoke of our readiness to exchange data on the numbers of troops of both sides in Europe. Continuing this matter at these negotiations in Washington, we have said to the Secretary of State that in mid-April we would be ready to begin negotiating a list of categories of data which are to be published, and in mid-May we would be ready to have an open exchange of information on conventional arms and armed forces from the Atlantic to the Urals and also in specific regions, such as central Europe, south and north Europe, and also in every individual country.

Let me say, in all honesty, that we were amazed at the response of our American partners. They have shown, to put it very mildly, no great enthusiasm to discuss that question.

Could it be that the Americans are not concerned about the balance in Europe? If that is so, it is then not clear why they have been exploiting so passionately this question of alleged Soviet superiority, why they have broken so many spears about the so-called asymmetries and imbalances.

Let me speak about regional problems now. There was a very serious and in-depth discussion of those problems, not only between ministers but also between high-ranking experts.

There was a particularly forward discussion of the situation around Afghanistan, of the situation in the Middle East, and in Central America, and also the Iran-Iraq conflict, and some others. Overall, we believe that over these two days a great deal of useful work has been done. These negotiations have become another important landmark in Soviet-US relations.

Eduard Shevardnadze then answered questions from the journalists present:

QUESTION: What is the mystery, that instead of the planned completion of the meetings at 6 pm, they did not end until 8 pm? Is it a good sign or a bad sign?

SHEVARDNAZDE: Well, I wouldn't call that a record. I remember one occasion last year when I

and the Secretary of State met for 18 hours. The reason is that we are discussing extremely difficult and complex problems.

QUESTION: Secretary General, Mr Gorbachev, during his press conference in Washington, said that NATO has an immense military superiority on the southern flank. And last week in Belgrade, he repeated the same line and said that some leaders of NATO are trying to compensate for the INF Treaty by building up new nuclear arms on NATO's southern flank. During your visit to Washington, did you raise this issue? And did you make any specific reference to NATO's southern flank?

SHEVARDNADZE: Well, as I have already mentioned, we have said that we are ready to publish data on the armed forces, on the numbers of armed forces in Europe, including central Europe, and also the southern and the northern flanks. We have also raised, in a very serious manner, the question of the NATO forces, because as of now, we do not have any serious and thorough in-depth discussion on the agenda, and we believe that this is something not only for Soviet-US relations, but a problem that is important in the overall international context.

This problem is of great importance, for example, in the Mediterranean. And that's why Mikhail Gorbachev spoke with such emphasis on that. And also, that is a problem that is relevant to everywhere. So the lessening of military confrontation in the seas and oceans is a very important, a very urgent problem.

QUESTION: Was any agreement or understanding reached regarding the symmetrical reduction of US and Soviet aid to their respective allies in Afghanistan, which would allow the agreement in Geneva to be signed in the next few days? In other words, has the Soviet Union agreed to stop providing aid to the Kabul Government in return for the US cutting off its aid to the Mujaheddin?

SHEVARDNADZE: No agreement has been reached on that question. And no understanding has been reached on that question. And this is because the problem of arms supplies is not contained in the document that has been prepared in Geneva. And since no understanding has been reached on that, this, as we understand, can prevent the United States from acting as guarantors of non-interference.

QUESTION: Regarding the importance of the economical dialogue, did you discuss with Mr Reagan or Mr Shultz some aspects or, in general, the economical relations between the Soviet Union and the United States?

SHEVARDNADZE: I have to admit that we had too little time to discuss economic problems. But we had a very high-ranking working group on the US and on the Soviet side that discussed that question for almost two days. And we have received some very good recommendations from that group.

QUESTION: When you were discussing conventional armaments, have you touched upon those weapons which lend themselves especially for a surprise attack?

SHEVARDNADZE: Well, this was addressed. But a more detailed, a more specific and thorough discussion of that took place at the meeting between our ministers of defence. And

this is quite natural, because they discussed the question of military doctrines, and it is known that military doctrine is the basis for all military activity. And it is good that our defence ministers have met. This is an event which is unprecedented in Soviet-US relations.

QUESTION: We understand President Reagan handed you a list of 17 dissidents who wanted to emigrate. When will your country allow them to emigrate?

SHEVARDNADZE: I have not yet read the list. I have the paper, but I have not yet been able to. And if there is a legitimate reason for them to leave, there will be no obstacles. I can assure you of that.

QUESTION: You said that the United States has shown no great enthusiasm to discuss conventional arms. Are we to understand that there will be no agreement concerning conventional arms? And why were you surprised at that?

SHEVARDNADZE: No. I did not say that there will be no agreement. Now what is involved here is, first of all, the negotiations now underway in Vienna to agree on the mandate and the specific subject matter of the negotiations to take place on conventional arms. As you may have noticed, Mikhail Gorbachev said that there was too much loose talk about the asymmetries, imbalances and so on. So he suggested that we should lay our cards on the table and begin negotiations. So what we are now proposing is to do that even before the negotiations on the reduction of conventional arms begin, to lay our cards on the table. And I think this is a very appropriate and fair approach.

QUESTION: And the US was not interested to do that?

SHEVARDNADZE: They responded without enthusiasm. And this is to put it mildly, as I have said.

QUESTION: You mentioned mobile missiles. Are the US still pressing to ban those missiles? And if I may, I have a follow-up question on your remarks on naval forces. Might we conclude from your remarks that, in the negotiations in Vienna on the forces from the Atlantic to the Urals, you want to include naval forces, such as the US fleet in the Mediterranean?

SHEVARDNADZE: As for mobile strategic missiles, this is a question that is being discussed. The United States actually is not insisting on the ban. We are discussing all aspects of that question. We are discussing ceilings, methods of verification, exchanges of information, and so on. As for your second question, at the Vienna meeting the question of naval forces is not being discussed. The question of naval forces will be discussed at what we call Stockholm II, that is to say, the second conference on confidence-building measures. But we have proposed today to convene an international conference on problems relating to a reduction in naval forces. At least we believe there should be a meeting of the Security Council of the United Nations to discuss this question.

QUESTION: Give us an evaluation of your visit. Everybody is hopeful for a treaty to be signed in Moscow. But tell us, from 1 to 10, where are we today? And secondly, how much will you play in all this treaty on START, the discussions on SDI?

SHEVARDNADZE: I cannot guarantee that a treaty will be signed in Moscow. There is a possibility. And given enough effort on the part of the Soviet Union and the United States. Particularly given enough political will, such a treaty can be prepared for signing in time. As for SDI, I think you must know, that there is an incompatibility between SDI and the ABM Treaty in the form it was signed in 1972. And we insist that the ABM Treaty should be preserved, and hence our attitude to SDI.

QUESTION: Aren't you satisfied with the interpretation of the ABM Treaty?

SHEVARDNADZE: As for interpretation, there is a reason why we insist that the treaty should be observed as signed in 1972. This is the best interpretation.

QUESTION: The question is about President Reagan's visit, whether he will be in Moscow or he would go to some other cities or city of the Soviet Union?

SHEVARDNADZE: As you know, Muscovites are very hospitable people. We have suggested various options for the President, but as I understand his choices are limited, but there is still time to go before the visit, and things might change. But I think both of us are sure that the President will be very well received and welcomed with great dignity and hospitality in any corner of the Soviet Union.

QUESTION: You said there is still linkage between SDI and the ABM Treaty. Is there still linkage between resolving the defence in space issues and the START Treaty?

SHEVARDNADZE: Of course there is. There will be no treaty on the 50 per cent reduction in strategic offensive arms if there is no observance of the ABM Treaty, at least for an agreed period of time. This is the condition as agreed at the highest level, there is nothing new here.

QUESTION: Is there any progress on the non-withdrawal period, the differences between the two sides on that?

SHEVARDNADZE: The difference here is not very big. I feel that there can be agreement on the period of non-withdrawal.

QUESTION: I would like to ask you about Afghanistan. There apparently at the last moment a new issue was brought up at the talks, the issue of the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The *New York Times* cited some unspecified Soviet diplomat as being very displeased with this development. Did this come up in your talks?

SHEVARDNADZE: No, this question was not discussed at our negotiations. This is to be discussed at the Afghan-Pakistan talks.

QUESTION: One more question on Afghanistan. With no agreement on symmetry of weapons, with no US guarantee for the Geneva talks, will the Soviet Union continue its plans on withdrawal, and if so, when will you begin?

SHEVARDNADZE: The Afghan question can be resolved without US guarantees.

QUESTION: The administration has said that that is not a practical solution because if Pakistan signs the Geneva accords, the United States would, in effect, be cut off from supplying the Mujaheddin while the Soviet Union could continue to supply its ally, the Afghan Government. Can you say whether you rule out the possibility of reaching an understanding that would provide the symmetry being sought by the United States, in other words, a joint cut-off of American supplies to the Mujaheddin at the same time the Soviet Union ceases to supply the Afghan Government?

SHEVARDNADZE: I rule this out. The Soviet Union has its obligations to the Afghan Government and these obligations are based on the status in a treaty — a treaty signed by the Soviet Government and Afghan Government. Those are legitimate supplies, and we are not going to review that treaty. We have had this kind of relationship — such agreements with Afghanistan since 1921. □

Mikhail Gorbachev Realities and Guarantees for a Secure World

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Perestroika

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At the CPSU Central Committee Political Bureau

AT ITS meeting on March 24 the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee discussed information about the results of admission to the CPSU in 1987. A further organisational-political strengthening of the Party ranks was noted. In ensuring more democracy in the process of selection of the new Party draft, the Party organisations began broadly practising a preliminary discussion of the candidates at the meetings of the collectives, are more exacting in checking on the qualities of the persons joining the Party, evaluating their activities and behaviour, the moral make-up.

The course of implementation of the decision of the CPSU Central Committee and the USSR Council of Ministers of July 11, 1986 "on measures to enhance the stability of the country's grain production and increase the grain and fodder resources in the 12th five-year-plan period" has been examined with the participation of the first secretaries of the central committees of the communist parties of the union republics, of a number of regional and territorial Party committees. It was noted at the meeting that on the whole grain crop output grew 17 per cent in the country in 1986-1987 due to an intensification of production. The quality of the grain procured by the state has improved. Yet a breakthrough in grain production has not been achieved, the plan targets for the volume of grain production are not met.

The Political Bureau approved a resolution issued by the CPSU Central Committee and the Council of Ministers of the USSR on acceleration of the socio-economic development of the Nagorno-Karabakh autonomous region of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic in 1988-1995. A wide range of measures is provided for to strengthen substantially the material and technical basis of the social sphere and to develop

(continued from page 115)

their delegations in Geneva to continue working constructively in this direction.

Eduard Shevardnadze and George Shultz observed a test of the communications link between the nuclear risk reduction centres established under the nuclear risk reduction centre agreement signed on September 15, 1987.

The sides held extensive talks on regional questions. They reaffirmed that the goal of the Soviet-US regional dialogue should be to help the parties to regional conflicts find peaceful solutions that advance their independence, freedom and security, and within this context reviewed the situation regarding Afghanistan, Central America, Iran-Iraq, the Middle East, southern Africa, Kampuchea and the Korean peninsula. Contacts and consultations on these issues will continue.

The two sides examined the work under way to expand areas of bilateral co-operation between the Soviet Union and the United States.

To continue their discussions on the wide spectrum of issues in Soviet-US relations and to ensure successful preparations for the Moscow summit, Eduard Shevardnadze and George Shultz agreed to meet again in Moscow from April 21-25, 1988, and then again in the middle of May. □

(Washington, March 24)

the productive forces and infrastructure of the region.

Provision is made for considerable expansion of the construction of apartment houses, general educational schools, pre-school institutions, hospitals and other social service and cultural establishments.

Work will be completed to ensure a steady reception of the all-union television programme as well as full volume of telecasts of Azerbaijan and Armenian television. The publication of literature in the Armenian language will increase, and greater scope will be given to the restoration and rehabilitation of the monuments of history and culture.

It remains an important task to educate the working people and the entire population in the spirit of internationalism, fraternal friendship and mutual assistance. It is essential resolutely to discourage the slightest manifestations of nationalism or disrespect for national sentiments of members of various ethnic groups.

It is planned to increase industrial output by more than 50 per cent by the end of the 13th five-year period resultant of the construction of new enterprises and reconstruction and technical re-equipment of existing ones. The agri-industrial sector of the region will receive further development. The scope of the building of motor roads will almost double.

The meeting supported government proposals for furthering the restructuring process in foreign economic activities.

The Political Bureau considered the results of Mikhail Gorbachev's official friendly visit to the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and his talks and meetings with Lazar Mojsov, President of the Collective Presidency of Yugoslavia, Bosko Kronic, Chairman of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, and other Yugoslav leaders.

The visit proved a highly important political event in Soviet-Yugoslav relations, consolidating the atmosphere of trust and mutual understanding between the two countries and revealing the similarity of their approaches to a number of major problems of socialist development and international relations.

A high opinion was expressed of the Soviet-Yugoslav declaration and the long-term programme for economic co-operation between the USSR and Yugoslavia in the period until the year 2000, which express mutual readiness to raise the entire package of co-operation to a higher level on the basis of principles sealed in the documents of 1955-56.

The meeting approved the meeting held by Mikhail Gorbachev with a group of prominent US senators and scientists visiting Moscow at the invitation of the Parliamentary Group of the USSR. That meeting fitted in well with the dynamics being acquired by political dialogue in relations between the Soviet Union and the United States, which should facilitate better mutual understanding between the sides and their interaction in world affairs.

The Political Bureau approved the results of Mikhail Gorbachev's meeting and Andrei Gromyko's talks with President Julio Maria Sanguinetti of Uruguay. It was pointed out that as a result of that meeting and talks relations between the Soviet Union and Uruguay made further progress on the basis of mutual understanding, mutual trust and co-operation and with account taken of the principles of the peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems.

Stress was made on the need for further interaction with Uruguay and other Latin American nations seeking to make a contribution of their own to a fair settlement in Central America. This interaction will be directed also at achieving non-military solutions to regional conflicts and promoting foreign policy initiatives in the name of improving the international climate, bringing about disarmament and strengthening peace.

The meeting examined the results of a conference of the secretaries for ideological issues of the central committees of the communist and workers' parties of socialist countries, which took place in Ulan Bator, and approved the work done there by the delegation from the CPSU.

The Political Bureau approved the results of Alexander Yakovlev's friendly visit to Mongolia during which a programme for deepening co-operation between the CPSU and the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party was signed.

The programme, covering ideology, culture and education, will undoubtedly help expand all-round ties between the two fraternal parties and peoples.

The Political Bureau discussed information on the results of Vadim Nikonov's working visit to Bulgaria. It was decided to adopt extra measures to step up bilateral Soviet-Bulgarian co-operation along the principal directions in the agri-industrial sphere and remove obstacles standing in the way of using available substantial reserves.

The Political Bureau heard Dmitri Yazov's account of his meeting with US Defense Secretary Frank Carlucci in Berne on March 16-17. It was noted that the meeting, while being an indicator of positive changes in Soviet-American relations, became a useful new step in that direction.

Considering the results of Yuri Maslyukov's trip to India, the Political Bureau approved his talks with Rajiv Gandhi and other Indian leaders. It was stated with satisfaction that the talks helped further deepen and develop Soviet-Indian co-operation in various areas.

The Political Bureau heard Nikolai Talyzin's report on his conversations with the Vietnamese leadership during a Soviet Party and government delegation's visit there to attend the funeral of Pham Hung.

The Political Bureau discussed also some other Party and state issues. □

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Resolution of the Presidium of USSR Supreme Soviet

The Resolution

of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet on Measures Connected with Addresses of Union Republics Concerning the Events in Nagorny Karabakh, in the Azerbaijan and the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republics.

A meeting of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet was held in Moscow on March 23. It discussed the addresses of the presidiums of the supreme soviets of the Russian Federation, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic, the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic, the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic, the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic, the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic, the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic, the Kirghiz Soviet Socialist Republic, the Tadjik Soviet Socialist Republic, the Turkmenian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic in connection with the situation that developed in Nagorny Karabakh, the Azerbaijan and the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republics. Guiding itself by article 81 of the Constitution of the USSR, the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet decreed:

1. To note that the situation that developed in the Azerbaijan and the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republics in connection with the events in Nagorny Karabakh is detrimental to the peoples of these republics and on the whole to the further strengthening of friendship of the peoples of the USSR as an integral, federal, multinational state.

To recognise it to be intolerable when it is attempted to resolve complicated national-

territorial issues through pressure on state authorities, in the atmosphere when emotions and passions are whipped up, when self-styled formations are being set up that declare for the recarving of national-state and national-administrative borders, which can lead to unpredictable consequences.

To condemn resolutely criminal actions taken by individuals and groups which resulted in the loss of life. To take into consideration the fact that the persons guilty of this are being brought to administrative and criminal account.

2. The Soviets of People's Deputies of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic and the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic, guiding themselves by the decisions of the 27th Congress of the Party, the subsequent plenary meetings of the CPSU Central Committee, the address of the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee Mikhail Gorbachev to the working people, to the peoples of Azerbaijan and Armenia, should drastically improve the political and educational work among the population in the spirit of the unshakeability of the Leninist principles of the policy of nationalities, friendship and cohesion of the fraternal peoples of the USSR. The causes of the aggravation of inter-ethnic relations should be analysed thoroughly and profoundly in all their aspects, and should be timely removed. It is necessary

to declare vigorously against any nationalistic and extremist manifestations. A calm, business-like atmosphere should be created in production collectives and in educational establishments. The efforts of the working people of all nations and ethnic groups inhabiting the republics should be enlisted to resolve the tasks of the revolutionary transformations taking place in our society.

3. The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic and the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic should take the necessary agreed upon measures to consolidate socialist legality and public order, to ensure the protection of the lawful interests of the citizens of all nationalities, to bring to strict account those who by their actions destabilise the situation, encroach on friendship and co-operation of fraternal Soviet peoples.

4. The USSR Council of Ministers should work out measures aimed at the solution of ripe problems of the economic, social and cultural development of the Nagorny-Karabakh Autonomous Region.

5. The office of Public Prosecutor of the USSR and the USSR Ministry of the Interior should take every necessary measure to ensure public order and protect the lawful interests of the population in the territory of the Azerbaijan and the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republics. □

Joint Soviet-Uruguayan Statement

THE problem of reducing strategic offensive weapons, ending and banning nuclear tests, concluding as soon as possible a convention on the total prohibition and destruction of all chemical weapons and reducing on a balanced basis armed forces and conventional armaments is central to the extensive and dynamic process of real disarmament, says a joint Soviet-Uruguayan Statement, released in Moscow on March 24.

The document was adopted upon completion of the official visit to the USSR by President Julio Maria Sanguinetti of Uruguay.

He visited the Soviet Union at the invitation of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet (parliament) and the Soviet Government on March 19-23, 1988.

The statement expressed the two sides' conviction that the key issue of the current times was to prevent the threat of nuclear war and build a nuclear weapon-free and non-violent world.

In this connection the sides characterised the signing of the Soviet-American INF Treaty as a major event in world political life. They opposed the spreading of the arms race into outer space and stressed the need for strict compliance with the existing agreements and treaties on arms control, including the ABM Treaty.

The sides favoured the consolidation of the regime of nuclear non-proliferation and the

establishment of denuclearised zones around the world.

They discussed questions connected with the situation in various parts of the world.

In considering the situation in Central America, the Soviet Union and Uruguay opposed the use of the policy of pressure and interference, backed the peace efforts applied by the Contadora Group and the support group, and reaffirmed the need for complete observance of the Guatemala Accords.

The USSR expressed support for the Latin American countries' efforts within the treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons in Latin America (the Tlatelolco Treaty). The sides came out in support of establishing a zone of peace and co-operation in the South Atlantic.

The USSR and Uruguay expressed concern over the situation in southern Africa and reaffirmed the need for the earliest solution of the Namibian problem on the basis of UN decisions.

The sides favoured the earliest convocation of a UN-sponsored representative international conference on the Middle East with the participation of all sides concerned and five permanent members of the UN Security Council with a view to achieving a comprehensive settlement in the region with due account for the legitimate interests of all parties to the conflict.

The need was stressed for the earliest termination of the Iran-Iraq conflict in keeping with Resolution 598 of the Security Council.

The sides pointed to the need for the quickest solution of the Afghan problem in the

interests of peace and stability in Asia. The Soviet side reaffirmed the readiness to withdraw its troops following the conclusion of agreements worked out in the Afghan-Pakistani talks at Geneva.

On Soviet-Uruguayan relations, both sides stressed the great importance of the deepening bilateral political dialogue, links between the governments, parliaments and other state institutions in both countries.

The sides emphasised the need for further efforts to look for new directions and forms of trade and economic co-operation between the two countries, specifically co-production and establishment of joint ventures. □

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President of Afghanistan appeals to nation

PRESIDENT Najibullah of Afghanistan has appealed to the people of the republic on the occasion of the forthcoming elections to the National Council, Bakhtar News Agency reported on March 28.

Afghanistan was on the eve of a major political event, he said. On these spring days, the Afghan people would for the first time in their history hold truly democratic elections to the country's supreme legislative body, the National Council of the Republic.

The victory of democratic, liberal ideas was filling with pride the heart of each patriot. Democratic traditions had been intrinsic in Afghan society for centuries, but it was only following the April Revolution that they were further developed. National reconciliation became a noble cause of people's government, he said.

The West was continuing arms deliveries to sow death and destruction on Afghan soil, Najibullah said. Nonetheless, the country's true patriots were courageously working to create coalition bodies of government with a view to establishing peace.

The Afghan people's peace initiatives were fully reflected in the new constitution. In keeping with the fundamental law, direct, equitable elections would be held nation-wide on the basis of the secret vote, Najibullah said.

These elections were an accomplishment of the policy of national reconciliation, of a new political course. They attested to the implementation of basic principles of the new political system — the multi-party and coalition principles which reflected the interests of all classes, sections and groups of Afghan society.

(Continued from Page 113)

added, with the enactment of a draft law on co-ops which is now being discussed across the land and will be debated, among other issues, at the congress of collective farmers as well.

The law, he said, will aim "to ensure the enhancement and development of co-operative and collective-farm property, create legal machinery to protect co-operative democracy, lay the economic, organisational and legal groundwork for all manner of co-op ventures and organisations, specify their rights and duties, and regulate their interaction with state and economic agencies."

The Soviet leader said that the policy of encouraging the co-op movement is "a direct follow-on to the Party's strategic line of extending democracy and putting our national economy right and part and parcel of the economic and social change pursued in the country."

He then spoke of the situation in the nation's agriculture, stressing the role the collective farms have to play in tackling the problems encountered there.

Gorbachev voiced confidence that the use by collective farms of their new rights envisaged by the draft law on co-ops will give a strong fillip to their development.

He said that gross agricultural output in the country over the past two years has grown by nine per cent, with the annual grain harvests in the current five-year period increasing by an average 30 million tons, meat production by 2.1 million tons and milk supplies by 8.2 million tons as compared with the previous five years (1980-85).

President Najibullah called on all Afghans to take part in the elections and cast their votes in the name of their motherland.

The President also appealed to the opposition leaders. "Once again we appeal to you," he said. "Think about Afghanistan which has been suffering from war for nine years. It is your task to take part in running the country's affairs. Our people's government has already offered you ministerial posts and other high positions."

"The government put forward the idea of national reconciliation and is pressing for establishing peace in accordance with the demands of the entire nation," Najibullah said.

"Earlier on," he went on to say, "we advanced numerous constructive proposals and are now ready in the name of peace to take more steps in that direction."

Historic chance

"In connection with the forthcoming elections to the National Council we are prepared to consider your proposals on forming a coalition government.

Don't pass up this historic chance.

Some of you have already chosen peace. Don't side with those who nurture sinister designs with regard to our country. We vote for peace and happiness for the much-suffering Afghan people."

The National Front and the Council of Ministers of Afghanistan also appealed to compatriots abroad in connection with the scheduled elections to the National Council.

"Shifts for the better have started, but they are not yet sufficient," the Soviet leader said.

He emphasised, for example, that by 1990 it is essential to increase the growth rate of grain harvests by at least 50 per cent and begin harvesting an annual 260 to 280 million tons in the next five-year-plan period (1990-95).

The General Secretary then spoke of new economic management methods in the countryside and cited specific examples of business gumption and efficiency on the farms.

He spoke also of the tasks facing agrarian scientists, priorities in modernising the technical foundation of agriculture, and the need to develop social services in the countryside in every way.

Gorbachev pointed to the significance of individual smallholdings and called for providing conditions to help people to manage them.

He said the Politburo of the Party's Central Committee has decided to devote one of the forthcoming regular Central Committee plenums to discussing the whole gamut of issues concerning agrarian policy.

As he concluded his statement, the General Secretary stressed once again that perestroika is being conducted "in the name of the people, in the name of improving their lives materially and spiritually in every way."

"We can and must restore Lenin's image of socialist society as the most humane and fairest. We shall continue unwaveringly and unswervingly following the revolutionary principles of perestroika: more glasnost (openness), more democracy, more socialism," Gorbachev said. □

"The policy of national reconciliation has removed all obstacles in the way of peace on our land. We urge you to return home. The doors are open for you," the appeal said.

Last year, it observed, more than 120,000 people returned home despite all the obstacles. The state provided the returnees with jobs, housing and food and granted them the right to participate in the coalition government and local bodies of government.

People of call-up age were granted deferment of military service. Civil servants and servicemen were guaranteed their former jobs.

The appeal called on the compatriots to work jointly towards establishing a peaceful, fair life and taking a most active part in the country's public life. □

Trade in licences: new opportunities

AN increasingly marked role in the trade of licences and know-how has been played in recent years by mixed societies with the participation of the Soviet foreign trade association Licensintorg and Western partners.

Igor Malyshev, General Director of the Soviet-West German society Technounion, and Valdimir Yefremov, General Director of the Soviet-Italian society Technicon, told the participants in a conference being held within the framework of the international exhibition "Technology-88" about the activities of such firms and new opportunities for trade in licences.

"Firms from the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) occupy one of the leading places by volume of trade in licences with the Soviet Union. The turnover of the trade in licences grows by 25 per cent a year, on an average", Igor Malyshev pointed out. "About 500 licence agreements and about twenty agreements on production coordinations have been concluded with our West German partners. In recent years the society has been actively co-operating with the leading engineering firms of the FRG. Due to that, it became possible to implement a number of big joint projects in third countries, including those in Australia, in South American and South-East Asian countries."

"Over the years of its activities the Soviet-Italian society Technicon has sold dozens of licences to Western countries for industrial installations developed in the Soviet Union", said Valdimir Yefremov. "Italian technology was supplied to the Soviet market simultaneously with the firm's technical assistance. Joint engineering projects have been implemented with Italian firms in third countries under Soviet licences."

The role of mixed societies will grow under the conditions of reorganisation of the system of foreign economic relations in the USSR, it was pointed out at the conference. Licensintorg is now negotiating with firms in Hungary, India, and Japan for the establishment of such societies. An agreement on setting up the first mixed firm for trade in licences between the Soviet Union and the United States will enter into force soon. □

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