

Mikhail Gorbachev's meeting with George Shultz

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, received George Shultz, Secretary of State of the United States of America, on April 22. The main theme of their conversation was the forthcoming fourth Soviet-American summit — what its content should be and what atmosphere is needed for its success.

At the start of the conversation Mikhail Gorbachev agreed with the Secretary of State's remark that it is important to listen not only to what people say when they are visiting but also to what they say when they are at home. From this point of view we in the Soviet Union could not but pay attention to the recent public statements by the US President, he said. We would not want to think that we have exaggerated when we positively assessed the development of Soviet-American relations in recent times. This evaluation, as it seemed to us, is based on the assumption that both sides have started approaching each other more realistically, have begun to climb out of the prison of stereotypes and shed attempts to impose their views proceeding from one's interests alone, Mikhail Gorbachev said.

Political realities

But despite what was said and done only recently in Washington sermons are again being delivered to us and we are being instructed on how we should behave ourselves. Our foreign policy is being assessed only negatively while the policy of the US Administration is assessed only positively, Mikhail Gorbachev said. Moreover, everything that has been achieved in Soviet-American relations is being ascribed to the policy of strength and "putting pressure on the soviets". Incidentally, this "concept of strength" is being backed up also by demonstrations of strength in respect of Nicaragua, Panama and in the Persian Gulf.

In these statements we again see a refusal to face up to the political realities and a disregard for the interests of others, for the principle of the balance of interests.

The question arises: how can this be explained and what is happening? We understand that an election campaign is under way and there exist old ideological attachments. But after all there also exists responsibility to the world.

For us it is a reality that any administration will defend its country's interests, Mikhail

Gorbachev went on. But it appears that these interests should reflect the will of the people. We are attentively following the sentiments of the American public and note with satisfaction that both the Soviet and American people sincerely welcome signs of change for the better in relations between our countries. It turns out that on looking into the future many people in America not only do not want confrontation to remain but even reject the word "rivalry". The majority is for friendly relations.

So whose interests are mirrored by official statements counting on fundamental concessions by the USSR and actually justifying the arms race? And is it not here that we should look for the deceleration, the signs of which we observe time and again in the ongoing talks, including those connected with President Reagan's visit to Moscow?

Co-operation

And will it really happen that the forthcoming visit by a US President to the USSR after a 15-year interval and after as many as three meetings with the present Soviet leadership will be reduced to going again into the "political ABC" — to explanations about existing realities which it is dangerous to ignore.

Today, Mikhail Gorbachev went on, narrow pragmatism has become counter-productive. It fetters mentality, impedes a broad vision of the present-day world and realisation of the fact that mankind has no future without respect for the free choice of every people. Without this the solution of concrete problems will constantly wind up in blind alleys. Without this there will be no genuine interaction between such powers as the USSR and the United States. That is why we keep repeating that Soviet-American relations are in need of a drastic restructuring. It is time to get rid of delusions that we are insisting on this because of "weakness", that because the position of the present Soviet leadership supposedly is unstable it is interested in some foreign policy success and for this reason is "persuading" the Americans to agree to co-operation. A real policy cannot be based on such absurdities. One can only miss the chance given by time to solve problems of world importance.

In this context the subject of human rights was touched upon. "We should reach an understanding here at long last in terms of principles," Gorbachev said.

"Despite the fact that talks and other contacts on this topic have been lately acquiring a business-like nature, the US approach to it remains confrontational and geared to interference in our domestic affairs: we are confronted with demands, terms and grievances all the time.

"We have so far been showing restraint. But if we reciprocate — and we can do so over a wide range of issues, the atmosphere in Soviet-American relations can become such as will make it no longer possible to solve any further issues.

"We should realise once and for all that the Soviet and American societies have different values, and should not attempt to foist our customs and our ideas of what is good and what is bad on each other.

"Each country has many problems of its own and let it take care of them in its own way. This does not rule out, but, on the contrary, presupposes, studies of each other, cultural and scientific exchanges, and so on. Let people take a look themselves and form their own judgement on everything.

"We are not going to re-educate the United States and do not recognise that it has any right to re-educate us."

The conversation also covered regional problems, including those connected with the Iran-Iraq war.

A high opinion was expressed of the Geneva Accords on Afghanistan. "By how the USSR and the United States will act in the process of the Afghanistan settlement," Gorbachev said, "the whole world will judge the worth of Soviet-American relations as a factor for improvement in the international situation. It is very dangerous if either side succumbs to the temptation to act contrary to the principle that Afghanistan should be an independent, neutral, non-aligned nation."

The discussion covered the main issues that could come up at the forthcoming Moscow meeting of the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party and the US President. It was noted that during the meetings of Eduard Shevardnadze and George Shultz and at the delegations' talks in Geneva a large amount of work has been handled. But problems remain.

Mutual respect

"We still are for completing the possible documents by President Reagan's arrival in Moscow," Gorbachev said.

The interlocutors agreed that the two countries should not limit themselves to what has already been achieved in Washington. The fourth summit can and should produce tangible results.

The programme for the US President's visit to the USSR in late May and early June was adopted in the main.

In conclusion Gorbachev asked Shultz to tell the President that in Moscow it is hoped that the forthcoming Soviet-American summit will be held in a spirit of mutual respect and on a realistic basis, mark another step forward and have concrete and weighty results. The US President will find here a reception worthy of relations between two great peoples.

The meeting was attended by Eduard Shevardnadze, Anatoli Dobrynin, Sergei Akhromeyev, Alexander Bessmertnykh, Colin Powell, Rozanne Ridgway, Paul Nitze and ambassadors Yuri Dubinin and Jack Matlock. □

POPULATION OF USSR

THE population of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was 285.2 million as of April 1, the USSR State Committee for Statistics announced on April 25. □

IN THIS ISSUE

Mikhail Gorbachev's meeting with George Shultz	p. 149
Eduard Shevardnadze's press conference	p. 150
Soviet-American joint Statement	p. 152
Georgi Razumovsky addresses Lenin anniversary meeting	p. 153
Soviet Government Statement on Geneva Accords	p. 156

Eduard Shevardnadze's press conference

EDUARD SHEVARDNADZE, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, held a press conference on April 22 at the Press Centre of the USSR Foreign Ministry. Addressing the Soviet and foreign journalists, he said:

The meeting with the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee Mikhail Gorbachev several hours ago ended the working visit by the Secretary of State of the United States Mr Shultz.

I think that in an hour or an hour and a half from now you will have an official report on that conversation. As far as I know the Secretary of State has already shared with you his impressions of the conversation with Mikhail Gorbachev.

I would like to stress that that conversation is of fundamental importance from the viewpoint of the further development of Soviet-American relations. Of course, it is also important in terms of the contents of the forthcoming official visit to the USSR by President Reagan of the United States, and the preparations for and holding of the fourth summit meeting. Very little time, slightly more than a month, remains before it.

But the specificity of our time is such that its dynamics is determined not by the astronomical calendar, not by number of days but by the quality of the decisions adopted by the sides, their readiness to search for and find mutually acceptable solutions, by understanding of the fact that the attainment of accord between the USSR and the United States is possible only on the basis of equality, equal security, account for the interests of each of the sides and of all other states and peoples.

When we speak today of progress, in a certain sense of the beginning of a breakthrough in Soviet-American relations we must realise that it was achieved precisely because of strict observance of these fundamental principles.

To portray matters differently, to contend that the agreements and accords between the USSR and the United States were not the result of their objectively coinciding interests and a manifestation of realism, but a result of some unilateral actions, of a policy from positions of strength means, to put it bluntly, irresponsibility and politicking in an area where there should be no place for this.

We would like to say this also in connection with some remarks made from the American side these days, true, outside of the framework of the Moscow talks. To put it mildly, they do not help the matter at hand, they give off false signals about what we can and must do together.

It would be a pity if somebody of us became frightened of the speed of advance and tried to put a brake on this very important process exactly at a time when many things have turned out to be possible.

This potential, this chance should be used.

Back in March in Washington the situation looked as if the USSR and the USA would not find a common language on Afghanistan. But a week ago the two countries became the guarantors of the Afghan settlement. Having signed the Geneva Accords we have established a new trend in the life of Afghanistan and the region as a whole and also promoted a more confident advance in our own relations.

Soviet-American relations are not a tournament in lightning chess, whose participants make speedy moves and feverishly press the buttons of chess clocks. It is far more

important for us to know that the clocks of our contacts are synchronised for the achievement of weighty and stable positive results. We proceed from this in giving priority to quality, yes, quality of our arrangements, to their viability.

We get increasingly convinced that the Soviet Union and the United States of America can fruitfully co-operate and achieve much in the interests of its peoples and the entire world community. The amount of joint efforts results in a new quality of relations, so do not hurry to predict where we shall be in our relations in a month.

I must emphasise that the Soviet leadership is doing everything so that the Moscow summit should become an important milestone continuing the line of Geneva, Reykjavik and Washington, asserting the triumph of the principles of new political thinking over the policy of strength in international relations.

Now about our talks with the Secretary of State. By the way, it was our twenty-fifth meeting in less than three years, a jubilee of sorts. And a jubilee is an appropriate occasion for making some general conclusions. A parallel review conducted yesterday by Mr Shultz and myself established a rather impressive governing dependency. I agree with the Secretary of State that certain progress has been achieved on almost all directions of work. While in the past the dialogue could not get off the ground in a number of areas of negotiations, such as, for instance, some regional conflicts, humanitarian and other problems, the dialogue is going on now and the spirit of a business-like quest for mutually acceptable solutions is characteristic of it. I would like to emphasise that it does not damage the interests of third countries.

Another characteristic feature of our dialogue with the USA deserves to be noted. This is now a thoroughfare with not just two-way traffic, but traffic in many lanes.

A parallel dialogue is being conducted on four main lines:

- The area of security;
- Humanitarian co-operation and human rights;
- Regional problems;
- Bilateral problems and bilateral relations.

The April round of talks with the Secretary of State started with the discussion of humanitarian problems. We were, specifically, interested in an answer from the US side to the proposals we had made earlier, in Washington, about creating the structures — along the line of legislative bodies, public organisations — for a regular exchange of opinions on humanitarian matters, for upgrading the system of legal and political guarantees of human rights, the development of people-to-people contacts and exchanges.

It should be noted that our discussions in this area assume a business-like, concrete nature. Each side considers in earnest the questions connected with human rights, with the observance of international obligations in the humanitarian area. But the dialectic is such that this process must not mean interference in each other's internal affairs. This is our fundamental provision.

Regional problems were discussed in a most thorough way.

And this is quite natural. After the signing of the Geneva Accords on Afghanistan, hope appeared for achieving effective means for treating such an old chronic disease of the world as regional conflicts. Confidence strengthened in the potentials of the United Nations

Organisation, in the possibility of achieving a desirable result by diplomatic process.

We have exchanged views on almost all conflict situations: the Middle East, the Iran-Iraq war, Central America, Kampuchea, the south of Africa, the Horn of Africa, Cyprus, the Korean Peninsula. It turned out that virtually everywhere — somewhere more, somewhere less — there exists a common field, I stress a common field for action by our countries with the aim of creating favourable conditions for political decisions, given, of course, a heightened responsible approach.

No, we did not work out identical optics of perception of problems and we do not look at them with the same eyes. But I think we have become more objective in our assessments, including also of each other's intentions. This is very important.

We hold that our conversation with the Secretary of State on regional problems was definitely productive and useful.

It goes without saying that the talks centred on security. Here the central issue is the drafting of the agreement on 50 per cent reductions of strategic offensive arms in conditions of observance of the ABM Treaty.

It is not a secret that until today's talks there remained five main knots which without untying it is impossible to achieve such an agreement.

As you know, they are the following:

- Non-withdrawal from the ABM Treaty within an agreed-upon period of time,
- Sea-launched cruise missiles,
- Air-launched cruise missiles,
- Mobile intercontinental ballistic missiles,
- The system of monitoring and verification as a whole.

These, as you know, are not new but very difficult and complex issues. On many of them as yet there even do not exist decisions in principle. But at the same time we have already approached such a line from which we can very quickly advance if we find the correct modus of solving them.

What is the situation after the exchange of views in Moscow?

I will tell you at once that we have not yet found a key to the problem.

But we now have a much better idea of what this key should be like.

New ideas and thoughts were expressed from both sides, specifications and new elements were introduced in positions on separate issues.

It can be said that rather good groundwork has now been laid in Moscow for subsequent practical advance at the talks on the key problems connected with the Treaty on Strategic Offensive Arms.

There is progress along other directions as well. There has been a certain drawing closer of positions on questions of nuclear explosions (here progress is obvious indeed) and the prohibition of chemical weapons.

New ideas emerged, new proposals have been made. Our positions have been brought much closer.

And yet, frankly speaking, we had some disappointments. For instance, we were disappointed by the stand of the US side with regard to the exchange of data on the correlation of armed forces and conventional armaments. The United States refuses such an exchange, at a given stage, in any case. And we thought this would be a good prologue to the talks on conventional forces, which should deal with the

matter of eliminating symmetries and imbalances first of all. You know how much ado, how much talk and speculation there were about all these asymmetries and disbalances. When we proposed that all the data on armaments from the Atlantic to the Urals be made public, not just general data on the whole of Europe, but also on regions, on central Europe, northern Europe, the south of Europe, and so on. It turned out that our partners are not prepared to take such a decision.

In order to remove imbalances if they exist, and we know that they do exist, it is necessary to know well what they are in the practical plane, in comparisons, and to take concrete measures to be fully prepared to embark on negotiations on this problem.

One gets the impression that NATO circles deliberately hold up the working out in Vienna of the mandate for the talks on conventional armaments. Agreement with regard to such a mandate in essence exists in a technical way, but not in a political way: it is sacrificed to the tactic of linkages with other matters. We believe this is impermissible.

Bilateral Soviet-American relations were also discussed at the talks in Moscow. It was noted that it has been possible to widen co-operation considerably in this area and to conclude some new agreements. Some agreements have already been drafted, some projects are being completed.

On the whole we assess positively the outcome of this meeting of ministers in Moscow. It has become an important stage in the preparation for the Soviet-American summit which is near.

There is an arrangement to hold another, the twenty-sixth, meeting of ministers in May. This attests to a bilateral striving to continue intensive talks, to carry the matter to the quest of arrangements.

Eduard Shevardnadze then answered questions from journalists.

Concerning the reality of concluding the drafting of the treaty on strategic offensive arms prior to the Moscow summit, Eduard Shevardnadze said: "We are not losing heart. We hold there are still opportunities to complete this complex and most difficult work." It is doubtful that the draft treaty will be completed by the visit of the President of the United States, he went on. "But following the Washington meeting

we have considerably advanced on the question of the reduction of strategic offensive arms in conditions of the observance of the ABM Treaty. Specifically, we have come to an understanding with the US side that the Washington arrangements on not withdrawing from the ABM Treaty will be formalised as a separate agreement."

"As to the Middle East problem, there might be different approaches, but there is a basis for debates. The main thing is that the United States, like other countries, has admitted that the known resolutions of the United Nations Security Council on the Middle East can serve as a legal basis for an international conference on the Middle East settlement."

The minister emphasised the Soviet Union's invariable support for the lawful rights of the Palestinian people. "I must emphasise with all responsibility," Eduard Shevardnadze said, "that the improvement of Soviet-American relations can in no measure influence the Soviet Union's position with regard to the Palestinian people's lawful demands."

Dwelling on the Iran-Iraq conflict, Eduard Shevardnadze noted that there exist already certain prospects for pooling the efforts of the USSR, the USA and other states in the quest for the solution to this most complex problem of the time. Certain groundwork has already been laid — the resolution of the Security Council adopted on the basis of unity of all the members of the United Nations Security Council.

Answering the question as to how the United States role as a guarantor of the observance of the Geneva agreement on Afghanistan goes together with Washington's intention to continue supplying arms to the so-called "freedom fighters", the minister said: "We still hope that the United States will keep from this action for if the arms supplies are continued, this will complicate the situation regarding Afghanistan."

The Afghan settlement shows that the United Nations can help overcome most complex conflict situations of the present. The experience

obtained can be used for solving other regional conflicts.

Answering the question about the United States most serious violations in the area of human rights, Eduard Shevardnadze said that such violations form a considerable list. "For instance, we remind the US representatives at almost every meeting of the criminals Brazinskas who hijacked a Soviet airliner in 1970 and killed Nadezhda Kurchenko, an air-hostess. They found shelter in the United States. Deplorably, the US representatives do not react to our requests in a responsible way. One could also mention the death penalty with regard to underage criminals in the USA, prosecution of participants in the anti-war movement, Washington's numerous denials of visas to Soviet trade union leaders and many other things."

One journalist asked what effect could the non-ratification of the Treaty on Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles at the Moscow summit have on its atmosphere. "The US Secretary of State, during the meeting with Mikhail Gorbachev and at the talks with me said he had no doubt about the ratification of the treaty," Eduard Shevardnadze said. "There is no doubt that if the treaty is not ratified this will have an adverse effect on the atmosphere of the meeting of the leaders of the two countries and will hamper the implementation of the aims and tasks set."

Touching upon the most promising areas of the Soviet-American co-operation, the minister said that the area of security is the main thing. "We have succeeded in the signing of the agreement on the elimination of intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles and this is really a historic breakthrough. Work is now under way, though slowly, to prepare the draft agreement on 50 per cent cuts in strategic offensive arms. There are good prospects for the drafting of a convention on banning chemical arms. There are interesting prospects also in the development of bilateral relations on the principles of mutual advantage and equality," Eduard Shevardnadze said in conclusion.

Soviet institute to study public opinion

By Academician Tatiana Zaslavskaya

FROM MISSILES TO CRANES

A first prime mover which used to carry an intermediate-range missile known in the West as an SS-20 has arrived at the Odessa heavy lifter factory in the southern Ukraine to be converted into a mobile crane.

After the Soviet-American INF Treaty goes into effect, the factory will be using the chassis of missile systems to construct building cranes of a high lifting capacity.

While the missiles themselves are to be scrapped under the treaty, the attendant machines may be employed for civilian purposes.

The factory has begun preparing to do this with the prime movers even before the treaty's ratification.

Its engineers have designed a 80-ton crane to be mounted on a former missile chassis which will be shortened to rule out its further use as part of a rocket launcher.

The Swiss-West German firm Liebherr has offered to take part in the scheme as well. Its president Hans Liebherr, who recently visited Odessa in connection with the joint venture, said his firm has the design of a 120-ton crane which can be mounted on former missile chassis with only minimum technological changes. □

NOT long ago, a National Centre for Studies of Public Opinion on Social and Economic Issues was established in the Soviet Union. This is natural, because contacts with the people are vital for a state and its economy to function normally.

In the early 1920s, Lenin called on Party and government organisations to study in detail the opinions and sentiments of the people, in particular those sections which can be affected by managerial decisions. It is particularly important to follow this principle of Lenin's now when we are democratising all spheres of social life.

Public opinion is a combination of views and sentiments of different groups on major political, economic and cultural problems. It is influenced by emotions and develops voluntarily, but can be regulated — to a degree. Studying public opinion enables managerial bodies to choose the most rational ways for adopting decisions and to lessen the risks of negative reactions.

The national centre's headquarters will be in Moscow and will include major sociologists, programmers and computer specialists, and journalists. It will have 25 branches in the capitals of the Union republics and major industrial cities. We will hold 10-12 polls annually on acute

social and economic problems such as prices, wages under cost-accounting, a new law on pensions, and so on.

The centre will inform the people of the results of its research through newspapers, television and radio. It will also publish a monthly bulletin and a quarterly journal, possibly called "Opinions".

The centre will focus on perestroika. Understandably, its immediate plans are to poll the people on the issue.

Public opinion is a complicated phenomenon, and to understand it we need special methodological studies. We must know and understand the psychological nuances of the polls. The better we study public opinion, the more accurate will be our forecasts of possible public reaction. So far, we lag behind developed capitalist countries in this sphere.

To bridge the gap as soon as possible, the centre and its branches will be equipped with modern technology to process primary information. It will be recorded on magnetic disks and dispatched via telephone communications to the main computer in the Moscow headquarters.

The first poll will be held very soon. Its subject: "Elections of Economic Managers in Conditions of Self-Government". □

(Pravda — Novosti)

SOVIET-AMERICAN JOINT STATEMENT

Here follows the text of the joint Soviet-American statement:

A meeting between Eduard Shevardnadze, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR and George Shultz, Secretary of State of the United States was held in Moscow on April 21-22 with the aim of further developing the Soviet-American dialogue and preparing for the meeting between Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee and Ronald Reagan, President of the United States, which is to be held in Moscow from May 29 to June 2, 1988.

George Shultz and Colin Powell, the assistant to the US President for National Security Affairs, who accompanied him, were received by Mikhail Gorbachev.

All aspects of relations between the two countries were discussed in the course of the talks which were of a business-like and constructive nature.

The sides agreed that the summit meeting in Moscow, the fourth such meeting in the past three years between the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee and the President of the United States, should become a new important stage on the road to more stable and fruitful mutual relations. Concrete possibilities of further advance in all spheres of mutual relations by the time of the summit were brought forth. The ministers reached agreement on the main events connected with the holding of the forthcoming summit in Moscow, including also the programme for the visit. The ministers will supervise the work to prepare the Moscow meeting.

Eduard Shevardnadze and George Shultz agreed to hold their next meeting in May.

The meeting of the ministers began with a concrete and thorough discussion of human rights and humanitarian issues. The sides agreed with the need to continue and expand the dialogue at all levels with the aim of achieving concrete progress.

The importance of the speediest and balanced conclusion of the CSCE Vienna meeting, including the successful completion of talks on the working out of a mandate for future talks on armed forces and conventional armaments, was noted.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR and the Secretary of State of the United States and the leading experts of both sides discussed in detail a wide range of questions concerning arms limitation and reduction with a view to giving an additional impulse to the ongoing movement that had been achieved lately.

The sides noted the progress achieved in this field and reiterated their firm commitment to make an intensive effort to complete the drafting of the treaty on the reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms and all related documents within the shortest time possible. They discussed the results of the work done to date to prepare the text of the treaty, the protocol on inspections, the protocol on the conversion or elimination of strategic offensive arms and the memorandum of understanding.

The sides discussed the remaining differences on such questions as verification and the count of long-range air-based cruise missiles, limitation and verification of long-range sea-based cruise missiles fitted with nuclear warheads, sublevels and mobile ICBMs. The delegations of the USSR and the United States will give priority to studying these questions as well as the already mentioned documents on verification.

The ministers also noted the progress achieved at the talks related to the ABM Treaty as it was studied at the summit meeting in Washington. There was a detailed discussion of the preparation of the joint draft text of a separate agreement on the basis of the formula contained in the joint statement by Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee and Ronald Reagan, the President of the United States of December 10, 1987. Eduard Shevardnadze and George Shultz instructed the Soviet and American delegations at the Geneva talks to work out this joint draft text for its consideration at the next ministerial meeting.

Having discussed the range of questions related to bilateral full-scale stage-by-stage

talks on problems of nuclear tests the ministers approved the text of the agreement between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, initialled by their representatives at the Geneva talks, on the holding of the joint verification experiment. They instructed their delegations at the talks to complete as speedily as possible the work on the supplement to the agreement so that the agreement together with the supplement could be signed within the shortest possible period of time.

The ministers also approved a rough schedule of preparations for and the holding of the joint verification experiment at the testing site in Nevada and the testing site in Semipalatinsk.

In respect of the 1976 Treaty on Peaceful Nuclear Explosions the ministers instructed their delegations to prepare an appropriate protocol to this treaty for signing at the Moscow summit.

The ministers studied the state of affairs at the bilateral and multilateral talks in Geneva aiming for a comprehensive prohibition of chemical weapons amenable to effective verification and applying to all states capable of having chemical weapons. They instructed their delegations to conduct further constructive work, including in such fields as confidence-building, openness, verification and security of participating countries with the aim of facilitating the working out of a multilateral convention banning chemical weapons. The ministers also noted their concern in connection with the growing problem of the proliferation and use of chemical weapons.

The sides conducted an extensive exchange of views on regional questions, including Afghanistan, the process of establishing peace in the Middle East, the Iran-Iraq conflict, the situation in Kampuchea, in the south of Africa, in Central America and also in the Korean Peninsula.

Eduard Shevardnadze and George Shultz studied the results of the annual consultations on questions of bilateral Soviet-American relations held in Moscow this April 19-20. They discussed both new and traditional directions of bilateral co-operation with a view to achieving concrete results.

(Translated from the Russian)
(Moscow, April 22)

Soviet-American verification experiment

"WORK on preparing a joint Soviet-American verification experiment at the test sites in Semipalatinsk and Nevada is continuing," a Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman told a press briefing in Moscow on April 20.

On April 18, an American military-transport plane brought to Semipalatinsk the first group of US experts along with the necessary equipment to prepare a joint experiment.

Seven Soviet experts were already working at the Nevada test site, said Vadim Perfiliev, deputy head of the Ministry's Information Directorate.

The landing of the US Air Force plane at a civilian airport in Semipalatinsk followed an exchange of notes between the Soviet and American delegations to the Soviet-American full-scale talks on nuclear testing-related issues.

The agreement to conduct a joint verification experiment, Perfiliev observed, was formulated

in the December 9, 1987 statement by the Soviet Foreign Minister and the US Secretary of State.

The sides agreed to enable the respective partners in the experiment to measure one-two explosions with a yield of not less than 100 kilotons and approaching 150 kilotons.

Each side will be able to use both teleseismic and hydrodynamic methods.

The aim of the joint experiment is to create the groundwork for the adoption of a decision on verification measures which the USSR and the United States will use to check compliance with the Threshold Test Ban Treaty of 1974 and the Peaceful Nuclear Explosions Treaty of 1976.

"Elaborating improved verification measures to check compliance with the treaties is the principal objective of the full-scale negotiations between the USSR and the United States," said the Soviet spokesman. "Their ultimate goal is to achieve a total ban on testing." □

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV

**To Feel Responsible for the
World's Destiny
(Moscow, November 4-5 1987)**

available at 20p

**Mikhail Gorbachev
Realities and Guarantees
for a Secure World**

Price 30p.

*cheque or postal order from:
Soviet Booklets (SN),
3 Rosary Gardens,
London SW7 4NW*

Georgi Razumovsky addresses Lenin anniversary meeting

A MEETING devoted to the 118th anniversary of the birth of Vladimir Lenin was held on April 22 in the Kremlin Palace of Congresses. Present in the hall were front-ranking workers from Moscow and Moscow region, veterans of the Communist Party, representatives of Party and government bodies and public organisations. Foreign diplomats and guests were also present.

The participants in the meeting welcomed with applause Mikhail Gorbachev, Vitali Vorotnikov, Andrei Gromyko, Lev Zaikov, Yegor Ligachev, Nikolai Ryzhkov, Nikolai Slyunkov, Mikhail Solomentsev, Viktor Chebrikov, Eduard Shevardnadze, Alexander Yakovlev, Pyotr Demichev, Vladimir Dolgikh, Yuri Maslyukov, Georgi Razumovsky, Nikolai Talyzin, Dmitri Yazov, Oleg Baklanov, Alexandra Biryukova, Anatoli Dobrynin, Anatoli Lukyanov, Vadim Medvedev and Ivan Kapitonov.

Georgi Razumovsky, alternate member of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee and Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, delivered a report entitled *For the Renewal of Socialism, for Leninism*.

"Time inevitably makes its imprint upon each anniversary of the birth of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. This is how it is now as well. We are marking the anniversary in revolutionary conditions when perestroika — the principal cause of the Party and the people — has assumed a wide scope and ever more deeply affects the interests of tens of millions of people", Georgi Razumovsky said.

"The greatness of the goals of perestroika is inseparable from that of the exploits performed by the Party and the people", he went on to say. "Behind us stands the edifice of a new social organisation, powerful economic and intellectual potential, a rich and many-faceted culture, everything into which the life, energies and talent of generations of the builders of socialism have been put. Soviet people can not imagine themselves, their present and future outside socialism, outside the fundamental values inherent in it. The Party is true to the revolutionary traditions of Bolshevism, feels the people's support, and is confident of its own strength and of the vitality of the Marxist-Leninist teaching."

"Perestroika, or restructuring, has led us closer to Lenin and brought Lenin closer to us. Three years of struggle for the all-round renewal of our socialist society have shown: the theory and policy of restructuring, elaborated by the Party and understood and backed by the people, match organically the ideas and practice of Leninism. These years have shown the Party's ability objectively to estimate the current situation and to draw the necessary lessons in order to advance the revolution farther ahead. Turning to Leninism, the Party and the people draw from it their confidence in the necessity of the perestroika policy, as well as ideological and moral strength in the work for the ideals of socialism," the report said.

"To Lenin, a serious policy began wherever the masses began to act", Razumovsky recalled. "But the masses had never hidden the individual from him. To Lenin, the individual, his vital interests and aspirations, dignity and happiness had always been at the centre of politics. The Party regards this as the main political and moral precept of Leninism, and strives to

firmly and uncompromisingly follow it in its activities."

"Ever since April 1985, which was a turning point for the destiny of socialist construction, our country has been continuously on the move, in the process of renewal. Society changes, so do we. The more clearly the great meaning of restructuring work manifests itself, the more vividly the richness and fruitfulness of the Leninist concept of socialism appears before us, the more urgent the requirement for a creative attitude to Lenin's theoretical and political legacy.

"More socialism today means more Leninism. In theory and in practice this means fully to restore Lenin's concept of socialism with its ideas of living creative work of the masses, a close alliance of the working class, peasantry and intelligentsia, and diversity of the forms of economic, social and cultural life.

"The historical practice has shown that attempts at artificially straightening the way indicated by Lenin and at stepping over some stages of development have hindered and seriously complicated the development of socialism and impoverished it", the speaker went on to say. "The Party firmly rejects the dogmatic, voluntarist and bureaucratic distortion of the ideas of Lenin. Only non-eroded and non-depreciated socialist principles can serve as reliable landmarks in the restructuring work."

"Yes, following Lenin, the Party proceeds from the premise that socialism unfolds its progressiveness only on the strength of the most advanced production-and-technological basis. Today this presupposes a cardinal change in the country's productive forces on the basis of the latest achievements of science and technology, and a resolute switch-over from an extensive to an intensive way of development.

"Yes, just as Lenin foresaw, the public ownership of the means of production remains the load-bearing structure of the economic system of socialism. It is to be cleared from encrustations of the notion of it being a 'nobody's concern' and from the estrangement of workers from it. A flexible economic mechanism combining the interests of the whole people, collectives and individuals is to be set into motion, and a consistent implementation of the principle of social justice characteristic of our society is to be ensured.

"Yes, a socialist state, Lenin believed, is to be an effective instrument for the building of a new society. But such can be only a state based on real sovereignty of the soviets, genuine democratism, and large-scale participation of the working people themselves in state and social affairs, and free from bureaucratic twists.

"The Leninist principles of the nationalities policy remain, now as well, the true compass in the nationalities' problem, which is one of the most difficult and delicate questions," the speaker continued. "To pursue an attentive policy of nationalities, worked out on the basis of a thorough analysis and accurate evaluations, in a Leninist way means to take into account as fully as possible the interests of each nation and the country as a whole and to strengthen fraternal friendship and internationalist unity of all the peoples of the USSR."

"The Leninist idea is that a high level of culture and civilisation is necessary for full assertion of socialism. The restructuring process should secure that the cultural layer of socialism becomes increasingly abundant and fruitbearing.

"We adhere to Lenin's idea that socialism

means humanism. The new system is called upon to accomplish in practice its mission — to elevate man. Perestroika focuses on the person, his well-being, his concerns, his work and life.

"So, Lenin's thoughts and ideas serve as the points of departure for perestroika. The Party focuses the attention of communists and all working people upon those ideas now. They help to work out a new approach and are the baselines for keeping count of successes and difficulties.

"A new social atmosphere — that of glasnost, free discussion of pressing issues, exactingness, non-acceptance of any ostentation and psychological ambivalence — is being established in the country," Razumovsky stated.

He pointed out positive changes in the development of the Soviet economy which is beginning to grow on a sound basis. The volume of production has begun to expand practically and fully as a result of a rise in labour productivity. In industry, the average annual rate of increment has reached 4.4 per cent over the first two years of the current five-year plan period as against 3.7 per cent in the previous five years. Agriculture develops more steadily. The grain harvest and the production of meat and milk have increased.

Perestroika has to its credit the beginning of a real turn of the economy to satisfying the everyday needs and requirements of people. Capital investments in the development of the social sphere exceeded the originally planned ones by more than 10 per cent while the rate of their increment was three times as high as that in the entire national economy.

"As you can see, there are achievements. However, there are no grounds to overestimate them, and, still less, to turn a blind eye to the difficulties being encountered by perestroika," the speaker said.

"One of the distinguishing features of the present day is the awakening of the people's socio-political activity. This is a live source of energy that feeds the democratic process. Soviet society today needs democracy in its effective, potent manifestations — it needs greater openness, criticism and self-criticism, electivity, real participation of the population in management and control."

The report emphasised that "a mechanism of power and management that is under the control of the people from top to bottom corresponds to the purposes of renewal."

The speaker devoted much attention to Lenin's understanding of the mission of the Communist Party and the role of the CPSU in the restructuring process. The Party, he said, "is at the head of the revolutionary renewal of society nowadays as well. It is precisely the CPSU that, expressing an urgent social requirement, of its own accord, launched a process of comprehensive changes in the country."

The report says that "the Party must display courage and get rid of those notions of socialism which bear the imprint of certain conditions and, particularly, those of the personality cult period. This means to develop democracy and openness in every way. Some people, however, fail to realise that," the speaker pointed out, and explained that it is virtually a question of "resistance of the conservative forces displeased with perestroika."

The Party sees its main internationalist duty in successful advance along the road of the October Revolution, the report emphasises.

(continued on page 154)

Andrei Gromyko receives Japanese delegation

ANDREI GROMYKO, President of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, on April 21 had a conversation in the Kremlin with Shigeyoshi Matsumae, a prominent Japanese public figure, President of the Japanese Association for Cultural Ties with Foreign Countries and President of Tokai University. The guest from Japan is 87. During World War II he was a professor at the Tokyo Technological Institute and opposed the Japanese Government's aggressive policy. For this he was cashiered and sent as a private to the Philippine Front.

After the war this prominent scientist in the field of electrical engineering devoted his life to promoting cultural co-operation and to the struggle for peace. He is an honorary doctor of Moscow State University. In 1978 the Soviet State conferred the Order of Peoples' Friendship on him.

The professor is a great friend of the USSR. He is a frequent visitor to the Soviet Union. This time he came with a big delegation from the Japanese Association for Cultural Ties with Foreign Countries at the invitation of the Presidium of the USSR Academy of Sciences.

Shigeyoshi Matsumae outlined his views as to what should be done to sustain peace in the world and develop Japanese-Soviet relations.

I have lived through the Twentieth Century having devoted myself to science, the guest said. During this period people used the achievements of science not for the sake of man's happiness

but for war and destruction of the natural environment. He spoke highly of the Soviet foreign policy initiatives, in particular the stand taken by the USSR at the Soviet-American summit meetings, the Vladivostok peace initiatives proclaimed by Mikhail Gorbachev, and also outlined a number of concrete proposals which, in his opinion, could help ensure stability in East Asia and the development of Japanese-Soviet relations.

Tatsuro Matsumae, Chairman of the Board of the Japanese Association for Cultural Ties with Foreign Countries, took part in the meeting and voiced a number of proposals on how to expand political co-operation between Japan and the Soviet Union. In particular he suggested the organisation of a number of new meetings between prominent politicians of the two countries. In the opinion of the Japanese side such meetings could provide a chance for a breakthrough in Japanese-Soviet relations.

Future of people

Andrei Gromyko spoke highly of the statements made by the two guests. Each of the proposals that have been made has such a content that merits serious thought, analysis and appraisal, he said, because it orients at good deeds in the name of the future and in the name of peace.

One senses in them concern for the future of people and for the way relations between countries and peoples should be conducted.

There is a popular saying that "all people want a clear sky overhead". It fully applies to the concrete thoughts expressed by our guests from Japan, Andrei Gromyko said.

Andrei Gromyko paid special attention to those proposals by the Japanese friends which are connected with the protection of the environment.

He who underestimates these issues does not understand many things, he said. This field, for one, makes the Soviet Union and Japan closely co-operate, it creates scope for millions of people of many professions, including and primarily scientists.

The question of questions is the elimination of nuclear weapons. Andrei Gromyko recalled that in Japan, in the Soviet Union and in the United States there are films which show the entire horror of the catastrophe into which mankind can be plunged by the use of nuclear weapons. Prior to the Soviet-American Treaty on intermediate- and shorter-range missiles, which was signed during Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to Washington, there did not exist documents on the elimination of any part of this type of weapon whatsoever. Now it has become clear that the process of nuclear disarmament has begun.

It was noted with satisfaction from the Soviet side that the protocol on scientific co-operation between the USSR Academy of Sciences and the Japanese Association for Cultural Ties with Foreign Countries, that was signed during the stay of the Japanese guests in the USSR, will serve the cause of the mutually beneficial development of science in both countries. There is no doubt that the further development and deepening of scientific contacts between Soviet and Japanese scientists will also have an impact on the strengthening of inter-governmental ties and the spirit of goodneighbourliness between the USSR and Japan.

Note was also made of the big personal contribution made by Shigeyoshi Matsumae to the strengthening of friendly relations between the peoples of the two countries. The gift he has made — a baseball stadium for students of Moscow University — is evidence of a sincere desire to promote the development of such relations between the two countries.

In conclusion Andrei Gromyko said that in Japan they like and know how to build tunnels. This is a good thing. So let us build our common great tunnel of friendship and goodneighbourliness from both sides, he stressed. □

SWAPO delegation received in the Kremlin

ANDREI GROMYKO and Anatoli Dobrynin met in the Kremlin on April 20 a delegation from the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), headed by its President Sam Nujoma.

The Soviet side expressed its full support for the just cause of the Namibian patriots. The firm view was expressed that the Namibian problem could be resolved by political means, by holding universal elections under UN observation and control, as envisaged in resolution 435 (1978) of the UN Security Council.

The latest constructive initiatives of Angola and Cuba, directed at the earliest settlement of the conflict in South West Africa on the basis of safeguarding Namibian independence and Angolan security were positively assessed.

The participants in the meeting observed that positive development was being blocked by the South African regime that feared free elections in Namibia. The aim of South Africa was to install in power its puppets and continue using Namibian territory as a staging area for gross interference and open aggression against Angola.

As to the Western powers and above all the United States, their policy encouraged the racists to ever more impudent and destructive actions. The sides denounced the stand of Western circles which frankly backed the racist regime in South Africa and hindered under invented excuses the introduction of effective international sanctions against Pretoria.

The representatives of the Soviet Union and SWAPO demanded the release of all Namibian and South African political prisoners and the repeal of the death sentences on the Sharpeville Six.

The SWAPO President cordially thanked the CPSU and all Soviet people for their firm and consistent support for the Namibian freedom-fighters. He said that the Namibian patriots welcomed the Soviet Union's efforts for establishing a comprehensive system of international security.

Nujoma emphasised that SWAPO was not against whites, it was against the colonial system. He said that after the people's victory in the national liberation struggle, independent Namibia would be a home for all Namibians, black and white. □

Expert Opinion

- Restructuring Begins With Each One of Us**, by Tatyana Zaslavskaya, Member of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR and prominent Soviet economist 40p
- Siberia is the Most Dynamically Developing Region of the Country**, by Valentin Koptuyug, Head of the Siberian Section of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR 40p
- The Prospects for our Co-operation Are Good**, by Vyacheslav Sychev, Secretary of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance 40p

cheque postal order

Three further booklets in this new series from Novosti Press Agency Moscow. Available from Soviet Booklets, 3 Rosary Gardens, London, SW7 4NW (01-373 7350).

(continued from page 153)

"Our country is part of the varied community of socialist states, each of which itself determines, relying on co-operation and interaction, ways for its development and organically combines initiative with a common coordinated line in international policy. Their approach to world affairs indicates that it is precisely socialism that is called upon and can become a real pioneer in the humanisation of international relations and that its supreme goal is man." Georgi Razumovsky emphasised. □

Results of the implementation of the USSR State Plan

AN intensification of production has been the typical feature of the country's economic development in the first quarter of this year. Nikolai Belov, Deputy Chairman of the USSR State Committee on Statistics (Goskomstat), told a press conference in Moscow on April 25.

Belov said that industrial output went up 5 per cent in January-March as against the same period last year, and added that the entire growth of production was achieved for the first time when the number of workers had been reduced by a total of 400,000. Labour productivity in industry rose 5.4 per cent. By and large, marked headway was made in the country's economic advancement, he summed up.

Belov noted that enterprises began honouring their treaty obligations more meticulously. They fulfilled 99.2 per cent of them in the last quarter as against 97.8 per cent last year. The output of such priority products as computer facilities has increased appreciably (by 16 per cent), of press-forging plant with numerical programmed control (17 per cent), rolling equipment (31 per cent), medical instruments (11 per cent), although on the whole the machine-building complex failed to fulfil the state order for a number of important indicators.

The first quarter of 1988 became a watershed for the social sphere, Belov noted. The targets for the commissioning of general education schools were overshot by 39 per cent, of vocational schools — 72 per cent, hospitals — 100 per cent as against the same period last year. The volume of paid services provided to the population grew 13.8 per cent. A total of 12.9 million square metres of housing space were built

in three months (a 5 per cent growth).

At the same time, Belov said that the plan for retail trade was not fulfilled as regards the country as a whole, even though its scope has somewhat increased. Although trade in meat and dairy products has somewhat increased, the population's demand for them is not fully met. Many manufactured consumer goods remain in short supply.

"In conditions of the growing democratisation of Soviet society, we regard it our duty to abolish 'blank spaces' and 'cover-up zones' which were present in statistical reviews even recently. An impartial picture of both achievements and drawbacks in the socio-economic sphere submitted to the broad public will serve to mobilise all of our forces to come to grips with the involved tasks of the drive for restructuring," Belov stressed.

National income produced over the first quarter of this year grew by 4 per cent as compared with the same period of last year, the USSR State Committee for Statistics reported on April 25. It summed up the results of implementation of the State Economic and Social Development Plan of the USSR in the first quarter of 1988.

Productivity of social labour went up by 4 per cent as compared with the first quarter of last year, with the entire increment in the national income produced ensured on that basis.

Industrial output increased by 11,000 million roubles. And the planned increment in the output was achieved.

At the same time, as regards a number of indicators, there was a lag in the attainment of planned targets. Orders placed by the state for

many types of products were not fulfilled by the machine-building sector.

The amount of a number of consumer goods manufactured was less than planned. The difficulties in providing the population with clothes and footwear did not let up. The type of goods which are on sale are not always in demand owing to their outmoded style and unsatisfactory quality.

Sixty-seven hundred million roubles were spent in the technical re-equipment and reconstruction of existing plants, which is 7 per cent more than in the corresponding period of last year.

The manufacture of about 800 new types of industrial products was mastered and started. Fixed assets worth 17,300 million roubles were put into operation resultant of state centralised capital investments and funds of enterprises and organisations. For example, the Beryozovskaya thermal station in Krasnoyarsk territory, coal-mining facilities in Kemerovo region of the Russian Federation, and oil-production equipment in the city of Sumy in the Ukraine came into operation.

Special attention in nature conservation work was devoted to regions with the most strained ecological situation. A government commission which has been specially set up is preparing measures for the rational utilisation and protection of the waters of Aral Sea.

The Soviet Union's foreign trade turnover amounted to 31,600 million roubles and grew by 8.2 per cent as compared with the first quarter of 1987. The share of ministries and departments which were granted the right to a direct outlet to the world market was 18 per cent in the aggregate volume of export and 30 per cent in the overall volume of import. □

Soviet parliamentary delegation visit Guyana

A DELEGATION of Soviet MPs, currently on a goodwill mission in the Caribbean, on April 24 ended an official visit to Guyana. The delegation is led by Alexander Mokuanu, Vice-President of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet.

The Soviet guests were received by the President of Guyana Hugh Desmond Hoyte and held talks with Prime Minister Hamilton Green, Foreign Minister Rashleigh Jackson, Secretary-General of the ruling People's National Congress Party Ranji Chandisingh, Secretary-General of the opposition People's Progressive Party Cheddi Jagan, other public and political leaders.

Summing up the results of the meetings and talks, the Speaker of the National Assembly of Guyana Sase Narain expressed the hope that the visit of the Soviet delegation to Guyana was a marked success, helped strengthen bilateral relations and marked the beginning of inter-parliamentary contacts between Guyana and the USSR. He stressed that both sides were building

their relations on the principles of peaceful coexistence. On the Soviet Union's foreign policy, Sase Narain said that Mikhail Gorbachev's impressive initiatives aimed at solving international issues were of great interest to Guyana and were the subject of repeated discussions during parliamentary sessions.

The continued arms race, the accumulation of weapons of mass destruction pose a grave danger to human life. All-round security can be ensured only through the destruction of nuclear weapons and complete disarmament. Guyana, the speaker noted, expressed in this connection its firm support for the Soviet-US Treaty on the Elimination of Medium- and Shorter-Range Nuclear Missiles and hoped that it will mark the beginning of a process of genuine comprehensive disarmament.

The Soviet delegation held a news conference at the end of the visit. "From numerous meetings and conversations on Guyanese soil," Mokuanu said, "we got the impression that the feelings of friendship and goodwill in relations between the two countries are growing stronger, that the Guyanese public wants to know more about the events in the Soviet Union. Taking into account the fact that the current international situation demands new political thinking and active involvement in the world processes of all countries and peoples without exception, the Soviet Union deems it necessary to establish closer ties with the Caribbean countries and to discuss with them the issues of peace, all-round

security and development, which are of mutual interest." The head of the Soviet delegation said that the conversations also focused on trade, economic and other relations between Guyana and the Soviet Union. He noted that the sides expressed an agreement in principle to develop them. □

New organisation formed to service nuclear power plants

A major new organisation has been set up in the Soviet Union to deal with technical snags, malfunctions and emergencies at nuclear power projects.

Called Spetsatom, it will also develop and test robots and remote-controlled machines to do various jobs in zones with higher-than-normal radiation levels. □

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV Democratisation — the Essence of Perestroika, the Essence of Socialism

The above pamphlet is available from Soviet Books (SN), 3, Rosary Gardens, London SW7 4NW. Price 30p.

Council for Mutual Economic Assistance: its aims and activities

Price 25p
Available from Soviet Booklets (SN), 3, Rosary Gardens, LONDON SW7 4NW.

Soviet Government Statement on Geneva Accords

Here follows the full text of the Soviet Government Statement issued in Moscow on April 26:

THE agreements on a political settlement of the situation relating to Afghanistan signed in mid-April in Geneva remain in the focus of attention of political circles and the world public.

Their signature has been hailed practically unanimously as an event of exceptional importance and tremendous international significance creating the external conditions required to settle the Afghanistan problem.

This view of the completed Geneva process is only natural. An important breakthrough has been made in defusing one of the more complex contemporary regional conflicts, whose reverberations were felt most acutely far beyond the geographical region in which it was developing.

By its significance, the signature of the Geneva Accords ranks with the Soviet-American Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles.

In both cases, success has proved possible owing to the sides' readiness to take account of one another's interests. Just like the treaty, the Geneva agreements demonstrate that new political thinking can take the upper hand over the psychology of confrontation and over outdated stereotypes in international politics.

The path to completing the Geneva process has not been easy. There were ups and downs as well as hopes and disappointments along that road, but in the long run it is realism, common sense and the desire of all sides involved in the settlement process to reach a mutually acceptable understanding that have prevailed.

The decisive impulse was given by the statements of Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, and President Najibullah of the Republic of Afghanistan on February 8, 1988.

At their meeting in Tashkent on April 7, 1988, Gorbachev and Najibullah were able to state that thanks to constructive interaction among all those involved in the settlement efforts, the last barriers to signing the agreements have been cleared away.

Much credit for the successful outcome of the Geneva process belongs to the UN Secretary-General and his personal envoy to the talks. This bears out once again the UN potential for settling crises.

The Geneva agreements are a balance of commitments and interests. The commitments include the cessation of the undeclared war against Afghanistan and the adoption of essential measures to plug the source of that war on Pakistani territory (relevant international guarantees have been given on this score).

The problem of securing the return of Afghan refugees to their fatherland is being resolved. Conditions are being created for them to be able to return to their home regions and to a peaceful life in their country unhindered.

The agreements determine the time-frame and phases for the return home of Soviet troops from Afghanistan where they have been staying at the request of the Afghan Government.

Their withdrawal will begin on May 15, 1988, and be completed not later than February 15, 1989. Our country is waiting for its sons who have helped a friendly neighbouring nation that has found itself in trouble.

The Soviet people will never forget their exploits and will hold sacred the memory of

those who have laid down their lives on Afghan soil.

The further destiny of the political settlement regarding Afghanistan now depends on how responsibly, consistently and vigorously the entire complex of the commitments assumed by the sides will be implemented. The Soviet Union intends to act fully in keeping with the Geneva Accords, firmly adhering to their provisions. There should be no doubt to this effect: the agreement about the withdrawal of Soviet troops, just as other obligations of the parties, is irreversible. The Afghan Government proclaimed its determination to comply with its obligations honestly and consistently. A mechanism of verification under the United Nations auspices is being established in keeping with the agreements. This enhances the degree of confidence about the implementation of the accords.

The stance of certain politicians and statesmen cannot but cause concern, however. Hardly had the ink dried on the documents of the Geneva Accords when statements contradicting the spirit and the letter of the Geneva Accords started being made. In this connection the Soviet side would like to emphasise again that the rights and obligations of the parties to the accords stem from their texts. Any deviation from the recorded accords can harm the cause of the Afghan settlement and impair the moral prestige of a state that broke the obligations assumed before the whole world.

Establishment of peace on Afghan soil becomes quite feasible with the signing of the Geneva Accords. These agreements create conditions for the solution of Afghanistan's internal affairs without outside interference, without further bloodshed.

The Afghan Government's known proposals about a cease-fire and national reconciliation remain fully valid. The absolute majority of the Afghans met the conclusion of the Geneva Accords with approval and hope. It is only that Peshawar-based "recalcitrant opposition" that persists in its unwillingness to recognise the results of the Geneva process and refuses to stop military operations. Its bellicose statements are nothing new. They only show that the sense of responsibility for the destinies of their country

and their people is lacking. Pakistan whose government signed the obligation not to tolerate the presence in its territory of political and other groups whose aim is to conduct subversive activity against the Government of Afghanistan, their camps and bases or in any other way, their organisation, training, financing and arming, should now have its weighty say.

The entire international community now follows the developments in Afghanistan with ever closer attention. The policy of national reconciliation conducted by the Afghan leadership headed by President Najibullah has yielded its first results prior to the signing of the Geneva Accords and increasingly draws to its side different strata of Afghan society. Many Afghans outside their country declare in favour of this policy, too.

The leadership of the Republic of Afghanistan proclaimed its readiness to start a dialogue with all the opposition forces, including those who continue the fighting. It is now generally recognised that the implementation of this line is a matter for the Afghans themselves.

It is only they that can find ways, which will be acceptable to their country, to reach agreement on a nationwide basis. The process can be assisted by others as well.

But it is important in the first place not to take any outside actions that could aggravate the situation and complicate the attainment of mutual understanding between the Afghans themselves.

Mediation efforts by UN assistant Secretary-General Diego Cordovez could also be useful in this context.

The Soviet Government believes that abidance by the Geneva Accords is the most important condition for restoring peace to long-suffering Afghanistan and for its assertion as an independent, non-aligned, neutral nation.

The agreements signed in Geneva mark a fundamentally new phase not only in the Soviet-Afghan relationship, but also in the resolutions of the entire Afghanistan problem.

To help the Afghan people arrange a peaceful life is a duty for all statesmen, politicians, community leaders and all honest people. □

Meeting of the Council of Ministers of the USSR

ON April 25 the Council of Ministers of the USSR held a regular meeting to review the fulfilment of the state plan for the country's economic and social development in the first quarter of 1988 and to examine the state of wholesale trade in the national economy and prospect for developing it in the light of decisions taken at the June 1987 plenum of the Party's Central Committee.

Speakers noted certain positive shifts in the nation's social and economic development in the first three months of the year. But they devoted most attention to discussing how to correct things in areas which have developed bottlenecks holding back the general movement along the path of perestroika.

The most outspoken emphasis in the debates was on the problem of food supply in the country. The government spent much time analysing the drawbacks in the work of economic sectors and individual industries, paying par-

ticularly close attention to the causes behind the unduly slow progress of mechanical engineering.

The government bound its standing bodies, the heads of ministries and agencies of the USSR and the councils of ministers of the constituent republics to adopt specific measures to remove the snags.

Describing the promotion of wholesale trade in producer goods as the top priority in overhauling the system of material and equipment supplies in the national economy, the government approved the state supply agency's proposals for developing such trade rapidly in 1989 and 1990.

Nikolai Ryzhkov, a Member of the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee and Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, made a speech at the meeting. □

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