

Eduard Shevardnadze on the meeting of Central American presidents

A correspondent of the newspaper Izvestia has asked Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze to comment on the results of the recent meeting of five Central American presidents. Here follows Shevardnadze's reply:

For many years the world has followed closely the situation in Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala.

There have always been enough problems in that region, mostly due to economic backwardness, social injustices, political instability and use of force to suppress popular discontent.

In different forms, struggles were underway in those countries for national sovereignty and democracy.

That was to be expected: peoples decided they did not want to continue to live in poverty, deprived of rights and freedoms.

But the situation was complicated by the region's proximity to the United States. It is known that since the proclamation of the "Monroe Doctrine", Washington has viewed the entire Western hemisphere as its trust territory and the only changes it allowed and encouraged there were those in line with its ideas of what was good and what was bad.

When in Nicaragua the people toppled the dictatorial regime and began effective social changes in their country, Washington did not like it. Neither did it like the upsurge of the patriotic movement in El Salvador and emergent new trends in Central America in general.

It must be said that in the United States many realised that processes taking place in the region were a natural result of historical development.

It is interesting that the so-called "Kissinger Commission", which prepared a special report to the President on the causes behind the aggravation in Central America, concluded that everything is due to the extreme economic backwardness of the countries in the region, compounded by stark social inequality.

The Administration even asked Congress for 350 million dollars in emergency aid to Caribbean nations.

Nevertheless, political intolerance, ideological considerations and a determination to "put things in order" in Central America by its own means prevailed in Washington's reaction to developments.

Pressure began to be applied to Nicaragua, there appeared mercenaries — "contras", and an undeclared war against Nicaragua became a fact of life.

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Central America turned into the scene of one of the sharpest regional conflicts.

It must be said that from the very beginning the prevalent opinion in the world has been that Central America's problems must be resolved by the countries of the region themselves.

This approach was supported by many West European countries, the leadership of the Socialist International and, of course, Latin American states.

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The Soviet Union invariably championed the idea of solving the region's problems without outside interference.

Let me remind you that a vast amount of work has been done by the Contadora group and the support group, which originated later. They blazed the trail to a series of meetings of the presidents of five Central American countries.

The latest one took place in Tela, Honduras. It adopted a package of documents sealing understandings on the practical aspects of a comprehensive resolution of problems generating tensions in the region.

The Central American five revealed their understanding of the region's problems and wisdom, boldness and realism in addressing them. They were able to find an accurate balance of interests and suggest realistic ways of removing mutual concerns.

The Soviet Union thinks highly of the accord reached by the presidents of the Central American states. We shall make every effort to facilitate its full realisation.

By the way, I would like to note that there are grounds for believing that our diplomatic contacts with the United States — and the issue of a Central American settlement has always been on the agenda of Soviet-American talks and was discussed again only recently in Paris during a meeting with US Secretary of State James Baker — played a certain role in bringing about the atmosphere which made the agreement of the five presidents possible.

What would I like to point out in these understandings?

In our opinion, the most important aspect is the unanimous approval of a package of measures connected with the disbandment of Contra contingents on Honduran territory.

This problem, while unresolved, was the main stumbling block in the way of negotiations. The just-reached understandings can cardinally improve the situation in Central America.

The Tela accords make it also possible, I believe, to resolve the issues of cutting off arms supplies to the region. An agreement between the USSR and the United States that they will both refrain from arms deliveries is most important in this respect.

I would like to remind you that considering the general relaxation of the military-political situation in Central America and after consulting the Nicaraguan leadership, the Soviet Union some time ago suspended the fulfilment of its commitments on such supplies.

We have complete understanding for the five counting on UN and OAS assistance and shall hold a most active position in favour of effective UN participation in implementing the Honduran agreements of the five presidents.

I would like to note one more positive point:

the joint document makes an urgent plea for an end to the civil war in El Salvador through dialogue between the warring sides.

While paying tribute to the responsible attitude of heads of Central American states, based on a realisation of the hopelessness of the use of force in regional settlement, it should be pointed out that Nicaragua's constructive and flexible position at the meeting was crucial for its successful completion. Without fear of making an overstatement, I must say that the Nicaraguan government is honestly and painstakingly abiding by its obligations as regards democratisation in accordance with the Guatemalan and Salvadoran accords and shows great political courage and true interest in establishing peace.

There is another aspect, which one cannot overlook when analysing the results of the Honduran summit. In the broad international context they correspond to those positive tendencies which are gaining momentum in world politics and reflect the growing awareness in Central America of the need to establish a just balance of interests of all sides involved in the conflict.

It should be also stressed that the first promising steps have been taken towards a real settlement in Central America, which make it incumbent on all members of the international community to support a very fragile process of working out a final solution that will meet the interests of all sides involved. In this context, the position of the United States will have special significance due to well-known circumstances.

We have noticed shifts in accents in the American approach towards settlements in Central America and would like the Washington policy of moving from the issue of force to political and diplomatic methods to materialise more consistently. Normalisation of relations between the US and Nicaragua, which could be initiated by the resumption of direct dialogue between them, could play a positive role.

Our contacts with the representatives of the Administration are dominated exactly by this topic.

I think it necessary to point out that, while giving a positive assessment of the decisions by the five presidents, we are prepared to render any assistance in their implementation and believe that other states will act in a similar way.

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The entire world community is interested in the settlement of regional conflicts. Each of them has its own unique specific features. Nevertheless, tested instruments of settlement already exist. They include ensuring national reconciliation on condition of non-interference from outside, while dialectically permitting active and helpful participation of the international community, primarily the United Nations. The important thing now is for everyone involved to have the political will and observe the balance of interests.

This generally universal approach should be applied to various regional seats of tension, irrespective of whether they are in South Western Africa, Central America or Afghanistan. We strive consistently to abide by these principles, which we regard as the best guarantee that there will no longer be areas of tension." □

(Moscow, August 10)

Eduard Shevardnadze's interview with Afghan news agency Bakhtar

The following interview with Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze was carried out by Bakhtar News Agency on August 7 during his recent working visit to Kabul.

"THIS is my seventh visit to Afghanistan. Every one had a specific purpose. All reflected the specifics of the time and situation and, I hope, reached their goals. And the Afghan issue was prominent on every day of the talks.

These diplomatic statistics reflect the priority of the positive solution found in the Afghan problem at last. We see in them the attention Mikhail Gorbachev and other Soviet leaders pay to the issue, and the intensity of his multifaceted contacts with President Najibullah. This time, too, I brought him a private letter from the General Secretary.

"But back to the purpose of this particular visit. This is my first time in Afghanistan since the pullout of Soviet troops. The Soviet Union does not think it has done its duty, and the matter is over and done with. As a guarantor of the Geneva Accords, my country works on for the final political settlement in Afghanistan. These last months and days, we contacted the UN Secretary-General and statesmen of many countries, in particular, foreign ministers, in Paris and Teheran. Afghan affairs were always prominent in our talks, and all partners spoke for peace in Afghanistan and a settlement by political means.

"Here I should like to stress the positive stances of Iran, with whom we have recently had constructive negotiations. We saw once again that Iran supports an extensive inter-Afghan dialogue with the view to a government representing all Afghan political forces.

"I also want to highlight the recent statement of the UN Secretary-General on Afghanistan. It reflects the desire for more efficient efforts of the United Nations in the establishment of peace in your country.

"The Afghan situation has dramatically changed since the Soviet troop withdrawal. On the one hand, the foreign interference turned practically into downright aggression. Civilians are among its victims now. Hundreds of them have perished under missiles in Kabul and other cities since February 15. The extremist opposition get large batches of weaponry from the United States and Saudi Arabia, and are supported by Pakistan. In fact, Pakistani units are fighting on their side. As for the United States, it may eventually turn into a belligerent from a guarantor of the Geneva Accords, if things go on this way.

"On the other hand, opposition forces are not homogenous. There are irreconcilables. The Jalalabad events showed us what language is the best to talk to them. Yet there are other forces who do not flatly reject the idea of a dialogue. They favour national reconciliation, and Afghanistan is willing to negotiate with them – and so is the Soviet Union.

"This quite new and ambiguous situation made it necessary for a Soviet delegation to meet President Najibullah. We came here to tell him about our work on the Afghan issue and learn his opinion on the current events. We are also to chart a programme for joint action, as we have done more than once.

"It is no exaggeration to call this half-year one of the most dramatic periods – perhaps, the most dramatic – in the last decade. It was a trying time for the republic and the entire nation. The developments reached their peak in March to July 1989. But this is mere phrase, and it does not fully reflect the tragic purport of the Afghan

nation's plight. We know the staunchness of the defenders of Jalalabad, Kandahar, Khost and Kabul. We know what a test of courage it was for the army and all Afghan patriots to defend the sovereignty and freedom of their country and thwart the extremist hope to rapidly determine its future by the force of arms. The ruling republican regime has shown its viability to the world. We all see its military, political and moral superiority over the enemy.

"As to my impression of Kabul, this was a short visit, which allowed only fragmentary impressions. Yet it was enough to feel the tense political atmosphere, full of pain and apprehension yet proud. Everywhere you see the resolution to hold on and reach victory. We also saw that the government had become wiser and more circumspect. Its influence is growing. The state apparatus is better organised than before. The armed forces are maturing, and the unity of all patriotic forces is stronger with every day. As far as I can judge, the realisation of the vital necessity for consolidation dominates Afghan public opinion."

Speaking about the causes of the Afghan opposition's military debacles, Eduard Shevardnadze said:

"I believe it would be fitting to mention here both its military debacles and its political defeat, and also the wisdom of President Najibullah's course toward a national reconciliation and the political settlement of the problem. The Soviet withdrawal was due to his determined actions along these lines. One can say now quite definitely that the Geneva Accords would be impossible without his having opted for the policy of national reconciliation.

"The results of the fighting in spring and summer have borne out the thesis that there is no military solution to the Afghan problem. The way we see it, repulsing the opposition's onslaught successfully reflects positive processes in the consolidation of Afghan society's patriotic forces. And now that Pakistan's interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs is becoming increasingly open and barefaced, the body of national, patriotic sentiments is directed both against those who inspire the aggression and those who serve as its tools.

"Besides, with more and more Afghans' realising that there is no alternative to the idea of a national reconciliation, and fatigue caused by the war and economic dislocation, they see no other course of action but the support of the line of the country's leadership toward a peaceful political settlement. Also, numerous sections of the Afghan population, even those who are far from enthusiastic about the current regime, grow ever more concerned over the prospect of the extremists' coming to power. Let us put it this way: the concept of a national reconciliation and the Soviet pull-out from Afghanistan cut the ground from under the feet of the irreconcilable opposition that has in effect degenerated into an anti-Afghan, anti-national force.

"It is already time to realise that it has no future and that the continuation of an inter-ethnic bloodbath is ruinous for the opposition.

"Our position on arms shipments to the Afghan combatants has remained unchanged. The Soviet Union has already suggested repeatedly that all countries stop arms shipments to the combatants and that a cease-fire be arranged concurrently. This is also the point of view of the Republic of Afghanistan's leadership that has come out with an initiative to get the country demilitarised.

"Regrettably, the answer to these moves remains the same: growing "infusions" of military equipment into the opposition's decrepit arte-

ries.

"Can the Soviet Union remain indifferent to this? Certainly not.

"The Soviet Union will render military aid to Afghanistan including shipments of modern weapons, respecting the obligations under its bi-lateral treaties – in other words, on a legitimate basis.

"This aid does not violate the Geneva Accords while the arms shipments to the Afghan opposition via Pakistan or by Pakistan itself are a direct breach of these accords. But, as I have already said, being firmly committed to the peaceful way of settling the Afghan conflict, the Soviet Union is ready to stop all shipments of military hardware to Afghanistan on a reciprocal basis."

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In his interview, Shevardnadze also listed the main stumbling blocks in the way of an early Afghan settlement:

"I believe that there are two groups of factors, external and internal ones. The chief one of the foreign factors – which, in the final analysis, largely pre-determine most internal ones – is that the Pakistani military have been frustrating the fulfilment of the Geneva Accords and have been escalating Islamabad's interference into the Afghan affairs. The adjacent territory of the neighbouring country is now more than just a rear base for the anti-governmental forces supplying them with weapons and personnel. Now Pakistan's military units have been made into the rearguard of the opposition's units fighting in Afghanistan.

"There is a natural concern over Saudi Arabia's foreign policy becoming increasingly anti-Afghan as that country has assumed the role of a sponsor of the escalation of the Afghan war. Saudi Arabia does not limit itself to liberal infusions of cash to the opposition, it came to the recruiting and sending to Afghanistan of mercenaries from other countries who are sowing death and devastation.

"It is sad that though members of the UN, these countries violate the well-known resolution of the General Assembly's 43rd Session that was adopted with their participation.

"And yet, for all these developments, the international scene is cardinally different today.

"Afghanistan's prestige in the foreign political arena has risen appreciably. Many countries in the non-aligned movement, including the great India, support the ideas of national reconciliation morally and politically. There are quite powerful impulses to hold an international forum on Afghanistan.

"I believe that the new situation being such as it is, the organisation of the Islamic conference should also arrive at new conclusions. As for Pakistan, we continue our dialogue with it in the hope that it will also shift its emphasis on the political means of solving the problem.

"As for Iran, as I have already said, when assessing its course toward Afghanistan, Iran, in all fairness, cannot be grouped with the countries conducting an armed interference into Afghanistan. We see promising trends in Iran that are evidence of the growing realism and constructive nature of Teheran's Afghan policy. We hail such shifts as, helping to unite the Afghan knot, they can objectively help normalise and improve the situation in the whole of the region.

"I have already mentioned the recent statement by Mr Perez de Cuellar. I am convinced that the UN must play an important role in the

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Conference at CPSU Central Committee

A CONFERENCE at the CPSU Central Committee held on August 9 defined the guidelines on the activities of the Soviet mass media. The conference, which was opened by Nikolai Slyunkov, member of the Politburo and Secretary of the Central committee, involved senior mass media executives of the country.

Viktor Chebrikov, member of the Politburo and Secretary of the Central Committee, in delivering a report at the conference, said that in renewing society, we should also renew the nationality policy. It is necessary that the mistakes of the past not just be rectified but drastic changes be effected. At issue is a new nationality policy whose fundamental principle is the equality of peoples irrespective of nationality and internationalism.

He pointed out that the realisation of new approaches in inter-ethnic relations will make it possible to consolidate the Soviet federation, enable each of the union republics to become a truly sovereign state, and will significantly expand the rights of all autonomous entities.

In this regard, Chebrikov stressed that the nature of the work of the Soviet mass media should not be obtrusive and be mindful of people's sentiments. Erroneous interpretations should not be allowed.

Chebrikov noted that increased national self-awareness, prompted by perestroika, is frequently used by all kind of careerists and irresponsible people for mercenary purposes. The latter would like, playing on national sentiments, to accomplish their own tasks which are at odds

with the interests of the people. Journalists should take a firm and truly Party stance here.

Nikolai Slyunkov made the concluding remarks. He noted the news media's role in overcoming difficulties in inter-ethnic relations. The tone of discussions around the nationality problems should be constructive and a transition should be made from heated disputes to a calm quest for solutions. A serious analysis of the work, which was carried out by the supreme bodies of people's authority, should be a direct duty of the Party press, Slyunkov said.

The conference also addressed issues of conducting the report and election campaign in the Party and extraordinary sessions of the soviets of people's deputies. Information was released regarding events related to the beginning of the Second World War. □

★ Moscow Party Chief on perestroika in the Party

THOROUGH changes are now under way in the Soviet Communist Party (CPSU), which is analysing the situation in the country and elaborating the theory and policy of perestroika, and taking public opinion into account more fully, Lev Zaikov, Politburo member of the Moscow City Party chief, writes in an article published in *Pravda* on August 9.

He comments on the results of a recent meeting on republican, territorial and regional Party chiefs in the CPSU Central Committee to discuss Party work during perestroika.

The organisational patterns of the city Party organisations have been reorganised, the commissions consisting of members of elective bodies have been formed to supervise the major directions of work. The Party staff is changing. It has been renewed and considerably reduced, Zaikov writes.

Describing the socio-political situation in Moscow, Zaikov points out, just as all over the country, there is a high degree of politisation of society in Moscow against a background of the aggravation of economic and social problems. Conflicting opinions, judgements and views have been revealed. Many of them may, in this or that degree, promote constructive solutions, Zaikov points out.

He noted that many Party committees avoid discussing and resolving urgent problems, and prefer limiting themselves to the circle of traditional, purely economic matters. As a result, they lose the initiative, and then control, over the situation when more people are demanding that the Party act more boldly, resolutely, far-sightedly and successfully.

The problem, in Zaikov's opinion, cannot be solved through extraordinary measures. The Party has already tried such things. It is only through tangible headway in the ideological, economic and social spheres that the magnetic force of the party can be restored and intensified.

Communists now need to rally their ranks and be in the vanguard of perestroika, Zaikov emphasises. The main thing, he writes, is to uphold the democratisation of society, to maintain the high level of activity of Muscovites through all

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Afghan settlement as is stipulated in the Geneva Accords and the corresponding resolution of the 43rd Session of the UN General Assembly. The General Assembly gave the UN Secretary-General a mandate authorising him to play a personal role to promote this process.

"We appreciate the UN contribution to the preparation and conclusion of the Geneva Accords. Yet at this stage a more active involvement of the United Nations, the most prestigious of all organisations, in Afghan affairs would be of no smaller importance.

"Some said the United Nations control mechanism should be limited to supervision over the Soviet troop pull-out from Afghanistan. But it had been originally devised to prevent external aggression against Afghanistan. To this end, the UN control mechanism should be consolidated accordingly.

"We are convinced that the United Nations, and the UN Secretary-General above all, can contribute tangibly to the establishment of a dialogue between all forces in Afghanistan. There have been quite a few ideas on that score. It would be in place to mention here the proposal I have advanced jointly with President Najibullah to call an international conference on Afghanistan as well as a regional conference to be attended by Afghanistan's neighbouring countries. May I also recall the proposed international group of experts and the burning need to make UNGOMAP more effective. We think that in the situation obtained, it would be quite useful if the UN Secretary-General got involved, either in person or through his personal envoy, in laying the groundwork for an inter-Afghan dialogue and a mechanism for political settlement in Afghanistan.

"The United Nations and its agencies could also play a crucial role in rendering humanita-

rian aid to the people of Afghanistan, no matter whether they live in areas controlled by the government or the opposition."

Shevardnadze gave a new dimension to the proposal to call an international conference on Afghanistan:

"It could be attended by the neighbouring countries, including Pakistan, Iran, China, India, the Soviet Union, as well as by the United States as a guarantor of the Geneva Accords, and also by UN representatives and, of course, by representatives of the Afghan groups involved in the conflict.

"The UN Security Council permanent members could also be invited. We have just had a precedent — the Paris conference on Cambodia.

"But some provisional alternatives are also possible, such as consultations to be held by some countries or other, meaning conferences attended by smaller groups of states."

Asked whether the talks embraced Soviet POWs kept in captivity, the foreign minister said that the matter was a very painful one for the foreign service, and its efforts were inseparable from actions across the country launched by newly-emerging popular movements for the return of the POWs.

"A delegation of one such popular committee called 'Nadezhda' (Hope) visited Pakistan recently to negotiate with the Mujahedins and the Pakistani authorities. After visiting Pakistan, as you will no doubt be aware, the delegation went to Kabul to meet the Afghan leadership and discuss ways of achieving a quick solution to this painful issue.

"Meanwhile, a delegation of a Soviet public co-ordinating committee visited Kabul to discuss the issue with the Afghan friends. Another delegation of the co-ordinating committee went to the United States to join efforts with the international committee for the liberation of the Soviet POWs. □

"The Soviet leadership and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR have used every opportunity to free our POWs who fought in Afghanistan. We have relied extensively on all our official and personal contacts with foreign statesmen, politicians and public figures and organisations. We have employed different channels for bringing pressure to bear on the opposition, and we have co-operated with the International Red Cross and other humanitarian organisations.

"We certainly discussed this question again with President Najibullah, who is also determined to take urgent measures to save Soviet servicemen."

Responding to the question whether sending Soviet troops to Afghanistan was really necessary Shevardnadze said:

"It is a very complex and complicated issue that requires a profound and comprehensive analysis. I would even say it requires research and investigation. There are quite a few factors making prompt conclusions not only wrong but also harmful.

"Research and analysis are being carried out. Once complete, the conclusions will be made public.

"But the mere fact that the popular government, following the Soviet troop pull-out, has been successfully retaining and consolidating its positions for six months now, gives food for serious thought.

"Nobody doubts that Soviet aid to Afghanistan was and still is crucial. But like many others, I often wonder if the Afghan national democratic revolution could have defended its gains relying only on the national armed forces and support of the Afghan people, with our full-scale political, moral and material backing, of course. Afghanistan has convinced itself and the whole world that it can perfectly do it on its own, and this fact means a lot." □

Statement by USSR Foreign Ministry spokesman on South-East Asia

THE Soviet Union closely follows the developments in South-East Asia in connection with the recently expressed readiness of Singapore to admit US military facilities to its territory. This is said in a statement made by a USSR Foreign Ministry spokesman. It was read out by Yuri Gremitskikh, First Deputy Chief of the USSR Foreign Ministry Information Directorate, at a briefing in Moscow on August 14.

The statement says that the decision of the Singapore Government evoked the concern of Singapore's partners in ASEAN. When ASEAN was instituted in 1967 it was solemnly proclaimed that the association's member countries would strive to eliminate military bases in the region. Singapore's plans evoked an extremely negative reaction of the official circles and public of a number of South-East Asian countries. They hold that these plans run counter to the ASEAN concept of turning South-East Asia into a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality, and a nuclear-weapon free region.

The Soviet Union cannot but share concern over the possibility of the further increase of the United States' military presence in the region. The United States insists on the continuation of power politics in the Asia-Pacific region and tries to bring pressure on other countries, in this case on Singapore. It is understandable that the deployment of new US facilities in South-East Asia would substantially alter the military-political situation there and would be fraught with the destabilisation of the situation and a deterioration of the political climate.

The Soviet Union proceeds from the view that the strengthening of security and stability on a

global and regional scale is possible only through the easing tension and arms reduction. As is known, the USSR advanced the idea of the elimination of foreign military presence in territories of other countries by the year 2000.

It declared decisively against the setting up of new bases on lands of others. The Soviet initiatives advanced in Vladivostok and Krasnoyarsk are imbued with ideas of consolidating peace, developing co-operation, easing military confrontation in the Asia-Pacific region. People in the USSR are firmly convinced that precisely this road would be in keeping with the aspirations of countries and peoples of the Asia-Pacific region, the statement says. □

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THERE is profound concern in the USSR over developments in Lebanon, Yuri Gremitskikh told a briefing on August 14. Despite calls from many states, as well as of the international public to the warring Lebanese sides to stop the bloodletting, the situation in Lebanon has deteriorated still more over recent days, he said.

The question of concentrating efforts to achieve a cease-fire now requires urgent attention, the spokesman said. Much depends on how actively the Committee of the Three will continue its peace-making mission. Gremitskikh expressed the opinion that the committee needs more vigorous and co-ordinated support by the international community.

The Soviet Union has been in contact with the sides involved in the Lebanese conflict, the spokesman revealed. These contacts are aimed at putting an end to the armed confrontation and starting a dialogue. Specifically, agreement was reached on consultations with France. Jacques Andreani, chief of the office of the Minister of State, and Roland Dumas, French foreign minister, are expected in Moscow in this connection. □

Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister on Lebanese crisis

"THE Lebanese crisis is the result of a complex combination of political, religious and economic sentiments which are tearing Lebanon apart from the inside," according to Soviet First Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Bessmertnykh, writing in *Moscow News* on August 9.

He points out that Lebanon has become a battleground of Syrian-Israeli and Palestinian-Israeli confrontation, linked directly to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Each new clash in and around Lebanon destabilises the situation in the region and threatens the prospect of a Middle East peace settlement. Israel is primarily to blame for the current situation. It is violating Lebanon's sovereignty and has set up a controlled "security zone" there. The Lebanese crisis is also being aggravated by inter-Arab contradictions which are often transferred to Lebanon.

The Soviet diplomat rules out any military solution to the Lebanese crisis. "Dialogue and balance of interests are the basis for establishing national accord. But the beginning of this dialogue calls for a favourable atmosphere and an immediate ceasefire." Of course, the crisis' external causes, The Israeli occupation above all, should also be removed.

Bessmertnykh stresses the importance of international assistance for a Lebanese settlement and called for stepping up support for Arab peace efforts. He said that the Soviet Union maintained contacts with Lebanese and non-Lebanese forces, and was in touch both with

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US Congressman visits Soviet chemical weapons site

US Congressman Larry Hopkins has stressed the importance of co-operation between the Soviet Union and the United States in the field of disarmament, including chemical disarmament. He was speaking in Alma Ata on August 14.

Hopkins is visiting the Soviet Union as part of a 14-member House Armed Services Committee group at the invitation of the USSR Supreme Soviet.

During a tour of the country, Hopkins requested and was granted permission to visit a Soviet chemical weapons disposal site in Chapayevsk, Kuibyshev region.

He described his visit as yet another step along the mutual confidence building road which the Soviet Union and the United States have embarked upon.

Absolutely nothing was concealed from us in Chapayevsk. We could see and photograph anything we liked, he told TASS.

Since the Soviet Union and the United States want to get rid of chemical weapons, the

Congressman said, the best way to do this is through active co-operation in the field of chemical weapons disposal technology. This will benefit people throughout the world. Of course, there will be problems, including those in the field of mutual verification. But all the problems are quite solvable.

People around the world have wisely decided to prevent a third world war. The best we can do now is to sit down at the negotiating table and discuss how we can get rid of these weapons, Hopkins said.

If the Soviet Union and the United States pool their efforts, ideas and technologies, this will be a fine example to the whole world. I am sure there are no problems that cannot be solved jointly, Hopkins said.

US CONGRESSMEN AT BAIKONUR

A group of the US House of Representatives Committee on Armed Services led by committee Chairman Les Aspin, now visiting the Soviet Union, familiarised themselves on August 14 with the complex of cosmodrome installations and Soviet space technology.

The guests inspected the assembly-test building, maintenance areas of the *Buran* shuttle and *Energia* booster rocket and the launching simulator of the *Energia-Buran* space system.

Explanations were given by USSR Pilot Cosmonaut Gherman Titov and cosmodrome specialists. They answered numerous questions put by the guests on prospects for the development of Soviet cosmonautics and international co-operation in peaceful space explorations.

The US legislators also visited the Baikunur Museum and saw the memorial museum houses of Sergei Korolev and Yuri Gargarin. □

This is the USSR Cultural Life

The state concerns itself with protecting, augmenting and making extensive use of society's cultural wealth for the moral and aesthetic education of the Soviet people, for raising their cultural level.

From Article 27 of the Constitution of the USSR

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

General Moiseyev on cuts in armed forces and armaments

IN an article published in the August issue of the magazine *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn* (International Affairs), Army General Mikhail Moiseyev, Chief of the General Staff of the USSR Armed Forces, writes that, in pursuing its military policy, the Soviet Union believes that an increase in weapons and armed forces will not result in stronger security and peace.

Lending its military doctrine a clear defensive edge, the Soviet Union began realising proclaimed obligations on unilateral reduction of armed force in Europe and Mongolia. General Moiseyev cites detailed information on cuts in forces and armaments and declares the USSR's readiness to withdraw all nuclear weapons from the territories of its allies in 1989-1991 if the United States makes a similar move.

The article points to the need for including all means of warfare in the disarmament dialogue, which are now outside its framework. Moiseyev calls for spreading the talks to tactical nuclear

weapons, naval forces and their armaments. he writes that "it is very important not to take steps which could complicate the negotiating process and give new impetus to the arms race, including those under the pretext of modernisation."

Noting a definite progress in questions of defence, General Moiseyev voices concern over the fact that no substantial changes have taken place so far in the strategy of the North Atlantic Alliance. Work on the SDI programme continues in the United States with a swing, which will eventually destroy the ABM Treaty. The US side presents the implementation of its military programmes as a forced measure in response to vulnerability of American interests from Soviet military might, while Soviet statements on changes in the military doctrine and strategy are described as 'Soviet rhetoric'.

Speaking of restructuring Soviet troops along the Soviet-Chinese border in line with the principle of reasonable sufficiency, Moiseyev points out that the Soviet Union is ready to withdraw military units and armaments from border areas by agreements with China, leaving only personnel necessary for ordinary border service. □

Chernobyl: people still await resettlement

More than 3,000 inhabitants of villages in areas neighbouring Byelorussia are awaiting a government decision on resettlement, a TASS correspondent reported from Bryansk on August 8. They have been living in a contaminated zone following the Chernobyl disaster for three years.

Zaboroye village is one of 12 settlements in the Krasnogorsk District, Bryansk Region, which are about to be moved, and its 945 residents have long since become used to safety restrictions. The villagers are careful to step on asphalt rather than on grass where the gamma radiation level is several times higher. No cattle is kept for fear of contamination from milk and meat. 'Clean' products are brought in from outside the area and the villagers are paid a monthly allowance of 30; roubles to meet extra costs.

One local manager reported that the gamma level at his home was 10 times higher than permissible levels, despite decontamination and special sanitary measures. Hence the illness rate which has doubled in the region over the past three years.

Resettling residents from stricken villages began three years ago. Before the resettlement was suspended in 1986, four villages had been moved to new sites: scientists assured the local and central authorities that people could remain if the territory was decontaminated, sanitary norms were observed and clean products brought to the area. Experience has proved them wrong, and now, more than 3 years after the disaster, people are preparing to move house. Chernobyl clearly will not be forgotten for a long time.

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Michel Aoun and Selim Hoss who head the governments in Lebanon's Christian and Moslem zones, respectively. This dialogue is designed to help restore peace and unity in Lebanon, but should not be regarded as Soviet recognition of this split, Bessmertnykh said.

This issue dominated the recent talks with the leaders of Iraq and Syria, which support the opposing Lebanese parties, in Baghdad and Damascus. □

Soviet spokesman on cancellation of NATO manoeuvres

SOVIET Foreign Ministry spokesman Yuri Gremitskikh welcomed the reduced scale of NATO's 'Autumn Forge '89' manoeuvres and the cancellation of the 'Reforger' war games as a step toward greater trust and a positive atmosphere in Europe.

Gremitskikh, First Deputy Chief of the Ministry's Information Directorate, was commenting at a briefing in Moscow on August 14 on reports that the headquarters of NATO's supreme commander-in-chief in Europe had announced that the scale of the alliance's largest military exercise, codenamed 'Autumn Forge '89', was being reduced for the first time and that the United States had decided against holding the traditional 'Reforger' manoeuvres this year.

The manoeuvres were to practice airlifts and sealifts of American troops to West Germany.

Gremitskikh said that the reduction of the scale and intensity of military activity in Europe could positively influence the Vienna talks on scaling down conventional armed forces and on confidence - and security-building measures in Europe.

The Soviet Union, the spokesman noted, had already taken similar steps.

Although the USSR had never held exercises of a scale comparable to the 'Autumn Forge' and 'Reforger' war games, it was reducing even its usual exercise activity, cutting the number of troops involved in manoeuvres and replacing troop manoeuvres with command-and-staff exercises.

Following the NATO move, Gremitskikh said, one could state that the reduction of military activity in Europe was becoming reciprocal. □

(continued from page 271)

available methods of political work, and to direct the energies and initiative of Soviet people towards the constructive renewal of socialist society.

Perestroika does not accept suppression of dissent. Progress is only possible through a clash of differing opinions. If we communists are convinced of our correctness, we should be able to uphold and prove it, Zaikov writes. □

Military reactor shut down

A reactor to produce weapons-grade plutonium was shut down on August 12 at a defence factory in the Chelyabinsk region, Southern Urals. This is the third reactor shut off in this industry.

Reactors stop running in line with the peace initiative of the Soviet Union which proposes to halt, under control, the production of fissionable materials for nuclear weapons. A large group of American congressmen, scientists and journalists, who have recently visited the top-secret South Urals city near Chelyabinsk, could see for themselves that this initiative is real. They saw the idle "synthesizer of death" and received exhausting answers to their questions on this problem from Yevgeni Velikhov, Vice-President of the USSR Academy of Sciences, who accompanied the American guests.

Another two reactors are planned to be phased out at this plant next year. The released highly-qualified personnel will be used to service nuclear power stations. □

Berlin border anniversary no excuse for attacks

THE establishment of a border between the capital of the German Democratic Republic and West Berlin on August 13, 1961, only confirmed a long-standing reality — the existence of a special political entity (West Berlin) within the GDR, Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman Yuri Gremitskikh told a news briefing in Moscow on August 14. He made the statement in connection with attempts in some Western countries to take advantage of the border establishment anniversary for further verbal attacks on the 'Berlin wall'.

A united Berlin under the administration of four powers, which the city was during the first post-war years, has long receded into the past and "it is not the Soviet side that is to blame for this" the spokesman said.

Subsequent events have demonstrated that the border helped to defuse tension in the region and assisted the achievement of the quadripartite agreement of September 3, 1971, and other international understandings, he continued.

West Berlin today is closely involved in international contacts, millions of West Berlin residents and GDR nationals visit one another, and the city has extensive commercial, economic and cultural relations with the outside world, Gremitskikh said. □

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Draft law amending the Russian Constitution

A DRAFT law amending the Constitution of the Russian Federation, the biggest Soviet constituent republic, was published on August 11 for public discussion. Along with draft laws on the election of people's deputies and local soviets of the republic (they will be published shortly), this document is called upon to further the reform of organs of state power, begun at the end of last year at the all-union level.

The drafts set out by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation incorporates amendments made at the end of last year in similar all union legislations. At the same time, they take proper account of the experience of past elections and decisions of the first Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR.

The Congress of People's Deputies of the Russian Federation will be the supreme organ of state power in the republic. It will include 1,068 deputies, elected for a term of five years. The congress will meet, as a rule, once a year. The Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation will be the permanently functioning legislative, executive and control organ of state power. Its members will be elected from among deputies of the congress and partially replaced every year.

As distinct from the country's parliament, which is to be renovated annually by one-fifth, the number of deputies replaced in the Supreme Soviet of Russia will be determined by the congress. The Supreme Soviets of autonomous republics will also function on permanent lines.

The new parliament of the Russian Federation will be made up of two chambers vested with equal rights — the Soviet of the Republic and the Soviet of Nationalities. This is an important novelty for the Russian Federation, which includes 16 autonomous republics and also several autonomous regions and national districts. The president of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation will be the highest official in Russia. The draft also envisages the creation of a constitutional supervision committee in the republic.

As during the elections of People's Deputies of the USSR, the number of nominated candidates to the supreme legislative organ of the Russian Federation will not be limited. Apart from working collectives and public organisations, meetings of voters at places of residence and servicemen in military units, the right to nominate candidates will also be enjoyed by pupils and students of secondary special and higher educational establishments.

Plans are afoot also to make amendments pertaining to the functions of courts. □

Special economic zone suggested in Armenia

SOVIET academician Abel Aganbegyan has given his backing to the creation of a Special Economic Zone in Armenian areas hit by a devastating earthquake last December.

The economist, who leads the USSR Academy of Sciences' commission overseeing efforts to bring these areas back to life, told the weekly *Moscow News* in an interview published on August 9 that this would help increase relief aid to the local population.

"According to initial estimates, damage from the quake amounted to eight billion roubles. Then, the figure was corrected to 13 billion roubles. But in reality much more will be needed for reconstruction," Aganbegyan said.

This is because new housing, social and industrial construction will be of a higher standard than before the earthquake.

Aid by the centre and all constituent republics so far has totalled eight billion roubles, and

another two billion roubles have been set aside for building and installation work.

As to how the remainder can be provided, Aganbegyan asks "why not use the possibility of attracting foreign capital?"

He counts first of all on the Armenian diaspora — three million Armenians living abroad. Contacts with foreign firms giving quake-related aid have also broadened.

So Aganbegyan suggests that Armenia be made a Free Enterprise Zone, which could attract at the first stage up to one billion dollars in foreign capital.

Speaking of the zone's possible specialisation, he said giant industrial projects should not be built there. Rather, the zone should have small and medium-size enterprises belonging to different forms of property, including high-technology facilities partially geared to exporting their products, consumer goods factories, and tourist facilities. □

Soviet official on experiment in agriculture

THE goal of a two-year experiment, which will be held in the Soviet Union in 1989-1990, is to emancipate farmers and give them the right to earn foreign currency and spend it as they wish, a deputy chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers' State Commission for Food and Purchases said in an interview with the newspaper *Trud*, published on August 13.

Vyacheslav Chernoiyanov said that if the experiment proves successful operations by collective and state farms on the world market will become routine.

Farms will be given the right not only to produce what they consider profitable but also to buy anything they need, without bureaucratic obstacles and excessive restrictions, he said.

Collective farms will now be able to buy a modern harvester, processing equipment or anything else offered by the world market,

which is a good stimulus to growth in the production of scarce products, Chernoiyanov went on.

The state will gain from this, too, as money previously spent on consumer goods now will be used to buy means of production, which in the future will help renounce food imports.

According to the government's resolution, farmers growing wheat will be paid freely convertible currency for any amount of high quality grain they produce above the average production level in the 11th five-year plan period (1981-1985).

For leguminous and oil-bearing plants, the average production level is calculated over the years 1986-1988.

There will be no limitation on foreign currency payments to farms. The state will buy their products for world-level prices. □

Soviet Free Economic Zones to be formed

TWO free economic zones will be formed in the USSR, one of them near Vyborg (north-west of Leningrad) and the second one — in the area of Nakhodka (the Far East). "The decision has already been taken," Ivan Ivanov, Deputy Chairman of the State Foreign Economic Commission under the USSR Council of Ministers said in an interview with the weekly *Argumenty i Fakty* (Arguments and Facts). The former will be oriented to industrial and scientific activities, while the latter will specialise on profound processing of raw materials.

A project for a tourist-industrial zone in Novgorod is now being drawn up, Ivanov said. There is also a similar project for Sochi.

Touching upon the legal and customs status of the free zones, Ivanov said that there was so far

no legislation on that question, but, as an experiment, the zones are to be formed as autonomous, cost-accounting entities with an independent budget and balance of payments. The zone administration will be subordinated to local government bodies and represent it in its relationships with the centre and the regions where it is located.

Generally, free zones are, as a rule, export-orientated, while the Soviet economic zones will be geared primarily to the domestic market. Not only foreign but also Soviet enterprises will have the most favourable conditions for their activities. The movement of commodities and services between the zones and the external market will be free of customs duties and non-tariff restrictions, including licensing. □

New Political Thinking

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Mikhail GORBACHEV

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Events in Nagorno-Karabakh

THE strike in the Nagorno-Karabakh autonomous region is in its fourth month. It seriously complicates the political analysis of the Karabakh question in the USSR Supreme Soviet, hampers the achievement of decisive changes in the socio-economic development of Nagorno-Karabakh, has an extremely adverse effect on the state of inter-ethnic relations in the region. Measures planned by the USSR Government for the introduction of regional cost-accounting, improvement of the population's living standards and alleviation of refugees' plight are being blocked. Each day of the strike erodes still more the possibility of a balanced and really just solution of the accumulated problems.

Hundreds of people of the Armenian and Azerbaijani nationalities turn to the special administration committee every day. The committee receives many letters with requests for aid, with complaints at officials' rudeness, lack of attention and shirking solution of matters. There are unconstitutional attempts to create an alternative structure of government bodies, calls for civil disobedience actions, for outright armed struggle. In these conditions the special administration committee, the military commandant's office of the special region are called upon to assume the main task for the maintenance of social security, ensurance of normal life, supply of the population with food,

combating the consequences of the severe drought that hit the region.

The USSR Council of Ministers, all-union ministries and agencies give vast assistance to Nagorno-Karabakh. There was deferral on payments for credits of tens of millions of roubles to collective and state farms of Nagorno-Karabakh. Seeds and combined fodder come from Russia, the Ukraine and Moldavia. Hay and straw making is in progress in the Stavropol and Krasnodar territories.

Specialists of the USSR State Planning Committee and the USSR Ministry of Water-Management Development study on the spot the possibility of building new reservoirs and overhauling the existing ones. Experts from Saratov and the Komi autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic are searching for additional sources for drinking water. A bakery is being overhauled. There are plans for the modernisation of a meat-packing factory and fruit canning enterprises.

The USSR Ministry of Trade and the organisation Tsentrosyuz have allocated additional funds for foodstuffs and consumer goods.

The delivery of milk, vegetables and fruit to cities and settlements of the region has been organised over the past month with the assistance of troops. Troops are unloading flour and supplying hard of access settlements with food, medicine and fuel. Army helicopters and trucks carry doctors, patients, women about to be confined. Interior forces units escorted more than 350 vehicles with food products, about 1,000 trucks with cargoes for the national economy and carried dozens of families of both nationalities to new places of residence.

All this is being done in conditions when ex-

tremist elements from both sides try to disrupt transportation, make raids and acts of sabotage on highways and railways, seek to destabilise the situation, keeping the population in constant fear. The region is actually blocked. Its transport communications have been cut more than once. Clashes on an inter-ethnic basis with the use of arms, of home-made explosive devices have become more frequent. Loss of life and the number of casualties among the Armenian and Azerbaijani population and servicemen is growing. Incendiary statements with recriminations appear in the mass media of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh, sound at meetings, and this whips up passions still more.

A considerable number of people of both nationalities in the region are embittered, oppose each other and are ready for aggressive actions. Crooks and profiteers thrive on people's grief. At the same time, many people in Nagorno-Karabakh come to realise that ordinary people of the other nationality should not be blamed for all the ills. The most sober-minded people address the special administration committee, the military commandant's office with demands that law and order be ensured on the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh and that those who push the two peoples beyond the brink of inter-ethnic strife should be brought to account.

In connection with a sharp aggravation of the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh the special administration committee, the military commandant's office of the special region, high officials of the USSR Interior Ministry who arrived in Stepanakert take additional measures to prevent unlawful actions, cut short acts of sabotage, inter-ethnic clashes and mass disturbances, to ensure safety of people. □

Pravda on ways to normalise the situation in the Baltic region

THE complex situation in the Baltic republics calls for the mobilisation of all sound forces on the platform of perestroika, and for efficient action programmes to overcome negative trends, says an editorial in *Pravda* August 15.

The newspaper emphasises that "in the pursuance of the nationalities' policy and in the elaboration of laws on citizenship and the official language, on the rights and duties of citizens, there is no other way but to be guided by the principle of the equality of nations and peoples."

Pravda recalls in particular that the session of the Estonian Supreme Soviet, by adopting a law

on elections to local councils — the law which sets residence requirements — provoked a strike at a number of enterprises.

The Russian speaking population legitimately regarded this as an infringement of their civil rights, since such restrictions violate one of the basic rights of Soviet citizens — to elect and to be elected — and run counter to the provisions of **Article 96** of the Constitution of the USSR.

And that is not all. Recently, under the influence of extremist elements, the people's fronts, which emerged due to the processes of renewal in the country, began to drift away from the wholesome goals of perestroika in the direction of narrow nationalist positions, *Pravda* observes.

The leaders of the people's fronts, aiming to win popularity among the population, do not stop short of sweeping criticism, hostile remarks about the communist parties of the republics, accusing them of disregarding the interests of indigenous nations, and widely publicise their irresponsible promises to quickly bring economic prosperity to the republics.

The newspaper notes that contacts between republican, trade union, Young Communists League and creative organisations and their federal elective bodies are being severed in the Baltic republics.

Anti-Soviet groups have overtly increased their activity. Certain forces are actively campaigning for the republics' secession from the USSR, and bourgeois socio-political structures are being restored. The leaders of opposition forces are putting forward ambitious demands for a re-distribution of power in their favour.

Pravda says that the division of communists in the Baltic region on an ethnic basis, by overt or covert transition of some Party committees to

the positions of those public movements which in a number of cases contradict the true objectives of perestroika, causes concern.

The newspaper stresses that a way out of the situation can be found only through political dialogue, and through strict observance of constitutional norms, and not through methods of diktat and pressure.

The current problems can only be resolved by further democratisation and the development and strengthening of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. This involves broadening the sovereignty of the union republics, economically, politically and socially, to accord with the spirit of the CPSU's nationalities' policy, the newspaper says. □

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at the

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Meeting of the USSR Council of Ministers

A MEETING of the USSR Council of Ministers was held on August 14. It discussed the draft state plan of the USSR economic and social development and the draft state budget of the USSR for 1990.

The economic situation in the current five-year period and particularly in the current year was thoroughly analysed. The main ways of improving the situation have been outlined. Even though a transition to economic methods of management has been made everywhere and the democratisation of management started, even though major structural changes in the national economy are nascent, the situation has been seriously complicated by a number of negative tendencies that have recently manifested themselves in the country's economy.

In the draft plan and draft budget for 1990, the USSR Council of Ministers outlines special measures to arrest the further deterioration of the economic situation, ensure the implementation of adopted decisions to improve the living standards of various groups of the population in the low income brackets and increase the prosperity of the whole people. These measures are aimed at a considerable improvement of the consumer market and money circulation, at creating conditions for the further development of the national economy in the coming five-year period.

The meeting thoroughly discussed the ques-

tion of supplying food products for the population.

It was noted that in conditions of a transition to the principles of cost-accounting and self-financing, while the new economic mechanism has not yet been sufficiently upgraded, there has been a leap in monetary incomes in some branches of the national economy and of certain groups of the population, unaccompanied by the increase of the output of goods.

The problem of financial improvement of the economy has been analysed profoundly. It was, specifically, planned to decrease by almost a third the state centralised capital investments in the production area, to cut substantially the expenditures on defence and on the maintenance of the managerial apparatus and to reduce the import of equipment and materials for the heavy industry.

The USSR Council of Ministers emphasised that all round deepening and comprehensive implementation of the economic reform, the transition of republics to self-management and self-financing mean a lever whose use will ensure the increase of the efficiency of social production in the years ahead.

After refining the draft plan and draft budget for 1990, the USSR Council of Ministers will submit them for the consideration of the USSR Supreme Soviet.

The meeting was presided over and addressed by Nikolai Ryzhkov, member of the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee and Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers. □

PRAVDA EDITORIAL:

The Party and the Soviets

THE Communist Party shapes the policy and implements it through the Soviets. This refers not only to the CPSU Central Committee and to the Supreme Soviet and the USSR Council of Ministers, but also to the central committees of the communist parties of the union republics, to the territorial, regional, city and district Party committees, and to the territorial, regional, city and district Soviets.

The Party conveys its policy to the people through persuasions and recommendations, through its personnel, and through the communists elected to the Soviets. Importantly, the Party organisations should strictly and insistently demand that the communists working in the Soviets set an example of high responsibility for the jobs they are given. Deputies from among communists cannot be freed from Party discipline. They have the right to express their opinion on the debated question, but once the decision is taken, must abide by it. It is their duty to act in unity with the Central Committee in matters deriving from the Party's political strategy, and from the resolutions of the Party bodies of corresponding levels, and implement the Party policy in the Soviets.

We are just learning the ropes, and we are making our first steps in delegating power to the Soviets. Although a lot of decisions have been taken, and a lot of words spoken to the effect that no one must do the work of the Soviets, even today duplication occurs, and this can be explained by objective and subjective reasons. First, in the current transitional period, the Soviets are not yet ready to assume all power. And

second, there are no corresponding legal acts, and trained personnel is unavailable in certain places. Finally, not all Party committees are ready to give up power. Some of the communists have got so much used to telling the Soviets what to do, that even now find ways of urging them on.

That is an old ailment. Even Lenin was alarmed by certain Party members' thoughtless interference in the affairs of the Soviets. But this ailment can be cured. The communists, Lenin remarked, must understand their present task of leadership: not to do everything on their own under enormous physical and time pressure, taking up 20 jobs and completing none, but to check the work of dozens and hundreds of assistants and organise inspection of their work at the grassroot level, i.e. on a massive scale. On the eve of the 11th Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) Lenin proposed delimiting the functions of the Party and the Soviets. The Party should retain general control over the state bodies taken together, without the current excessive interference, he said.

This particular approach is advocated by the Party today.

However, some people have understood the Party slogan "All Power to the Soviets!" as a possibility for depriving it of its political influence and casting a shadow on its leading role in society. There are also communists among the deputies who understand the transition of power to the Soviets as the transition of power to the deputy. Others, waving the banner of perestroika, calumniate our system, torpedoing the decisions of the Party committees.

As to the role of the Party, we must say in clear terms that the political system of socialism is unthinkable without the Communist Party. History has proved that the Party has won the

The journal *Kommunist* on lessons of the miners strike

"DURING the heated debates at the First Congress of People's Deputies and the first session of the USSR Supreme Soviet, one question was not explicitly formulated: how long are people prepared to endure disorder, how much time have the new legislature and executive got? The miners' strikes gave a clear-cut answer — none. "Substantial improvements are needed immediately," Otto Lacis says in the latest issue of the journal *Kommunist*.

The workers actually went on strike after the Congress of People's Deputies which for the first time granted the entire nation the opportunity to stand up for their interests in a normal, democratic and legitimate way. "This means that the huge unprecedented step toward consolidating the power of the people undoubtedly made by the Congress is nevertheless regarded as insufficient. The workers demanded more, and it is vitally important to try to understand why it happened."

The commentary headlined "Time Trouble" says it is not the first signal of the kind. The author considers the common desire to at least be told when and what improvements Soviet people can expect and what guarantees there are on this score are quite justified. However, the author points out, guarantees were hard to come by in the numerous speeches made by the ministers responsible for consumer goods production and distribution at the Supreme Soviet session. The author criticises wasteful state programmes that further aggravate the budget deficit and points out that wastefulness by the state, represented by its departments, encourages lack of thrift at individual enterprises. An end must be put to such practices.

"The miners reminded: you can no longer rest content with routine measures that sufficed ten or twenty years ago. The twenty years of stagnation expired, leaving perestroika with a time trouble situation on its hands, so action is urgently need — resolute, precise and free from new major errors," the commentary says. A "hope-inspiring signal" was given, according to the author, by the government's intention to press for the normalisation of the country's finance system by more decisive means, as attested to by the address of Yuri Maslyukov, Chairman of the State Planning Committee, at the closing session of the USSR Supreme Soviet. □

trust of the people and confirmed its right to be the political vanguard of Soviet society. The renewal of our socialist homeland can not go successfully without the active work of the Party — the initiator of perestroika and its organising and mobilising force.

It is extremely important that the Party and the Soviets back up their authority with practical work and that they make progress, however small, every day, every week, every month. Our current aggravation of the political situation roots in the economy. There are a lot of reserves which, if activated, will help do away with shortages and restore due order in hospitals and out-patient clinics, and in the streets. The Supreme Soviet works for a faster implementation of the measures to broaden the rights of the local Soviets and for concentrating their attention to the vital needs of the people. □

(August 8. Abridged).