

Mikhail Gorbachev's opening remarks at CPSU plenum

SOVIET Communist Party leader Mikhail Gorbachev said on Monday (October 8) that the Party's ability to continue as the ruling party and its very destiny will largely depend on how it acts during the nation's transfer to a market system.

In his opening remarks at the plenum of the Party's Central Committee, which was called to discuss the political, social and economic situation in the country and the Party's related tasks, Gorbachev warned that "the inertia of old thinking" was "a real danger to the Party."

"All our previous ideology presented socialism as an antipode to the market and viewed the recognition of a market as an encroachment upon socialism," Gorbachev said.

He added: "Yes, we are encroaching upon socialism, but only the socialism that was built bureaucratically, under which the country had veered off the path it had embarked upon in 1917."

Gorbachev said that the drafting of the programme for the transition to a market had entered its final stage. The programme will incorporate all positive aspects of the alternative blueprints.

"This will not be some kind of compromise document with rounded corners and fuzzy positions, but a programme able to rally all sections of society," he said.

Gorbachev argued that the Party "should help society shed prejudice and fear of the market."

"In a market, possibilities open to realise the socialist principle: from each - according to his abilities, to each - according to his work. A modern market presupposes the state regulation of social and economic processes through legislative acts, and a ramified system of social guarantees and social security," he explained.

Gorbachev blamed the country's numerous economic and social problems on the state monopoly on property, which makes it no one's property. He said that reliable guarantees will be provided to ensure shopfloor involvement in the denationalisation of enterprises.

It is primarily their staffs that should become their owners, and this approach will underlie the market reform programme, he said.

Gorbachev added that the state will continue to control such basic industries as the fuel and power sector, transport, communications, and the defence industry.

The question of land ownership is of great social importance, Gorbachev said.

The Soviet Communist Party supports different forms of land ownership, he reminded. A long-term lease of land, allowing farmers to bequest land plots and means of production, and in certain conditions leasing rights, is one of the most efficient forms of land use, Gorbachev said.

Commenting on the reform of the Soviet multi-national structure, Gorbachev said that the issue "is gaining decisive importance, practically everything boils down to it now."

"The optimum way to revitalise nations and realise their independence lies through the profound reconstruction of our multi-national state and the creation of a union of sovereign states," he said.

"The Soviet Communist Party resolutely opposes separatism," Gorbachev said, stressing that "communists have no more important task than staving off the pressure of separatist forces."

Unless current negative tendencies are reversed, the Soviet Union could turn into a Lebanon, he said.

Commenting on relations with other political forces, Gorbachev said communists are "prepared to enter into a coalition with all progressive, patriotic forces."

"Such a coalition could rally around an anti-crisis programme, meeting the interests of the entire nation, all layers of society," Gorbachev said. □

Gorbachev sends congratulations to German leaders

President Mikhail Gorbachev sent the following message of greetings to Richard von Weizsaecker and Helmut Kohl on October 2:

Dear Mr. Federal President,
Dear Mr. Federal Chancellor,

Please accept my congratulations to you and all German people. The unification of Germany, which takes place in full accord with its neighbours and other states and nations, is a great event not only for Germans.

It occurs at the watershed of two epochs. It has become a symbol and I hope it will be a factor in establishing a universal order of peace.

Unification could not have taken place if there had not been profound internal democratic changes in our countries, if the right conclusions from the tragedy of the most horrible war had not been reflected in real life.

On this remarkable day I want to pay tribute to all those in my country and in your country

who, overcoming sorrows, remembering losses and honouring the dead, did not yield to prejudice and fears, but persistently worked for the future, making this peaceful and worthy solution of the 'German issue' possible.

We expect much of our new relations with Germany. History, the deep roots of mutual influence and gravitation, the position of our countries in Europe and the world, and their colossal and mutually supplementing potential make many-sided co-operation between them possible and natural.

I hope this treaty on good-neighbourly relations, partnership and co-operation, which will be concluded soon and which should lay the foundation for our relations, will help achieve this goal.

I wish the great German nation happiness, prosperity and eternal peace in good-neighbourliness and friendship between the European peoples. □

Presidential decree on market

President Gorbachev on October 4 issued a decree, which says:

With a view to broadening the economic independence and increasing the motivation of enterprises to boost output and production efficiency and create conditions to introduce market relations, I hereby decree:

1. To proceed to the extensive use of negotiated wholesale prices in the national economy. During the signing of contracts for 1991, these prices shall be determined on the basis of wholesale prices developed under USSR Council of Ministers resolution 741 of June 14, 1988.

2. With the aim of preventing unwarranted overall growth of prices of producer goods as a result of the changeover to the extensive use of negotiated prices, to provide for introducing limits on the profit rate. All profits over and above this rate shall be deducted in equal shares to the federal and republican budgets.

3. The USSR Council of Ministers and the councils of ministers of union republics are hereby instructed, within the next ten days and their sphere of responsibility:

To establish a list of raw and structural materials and other producer goods, to which

fixed wholesale prices shall be applied, and to determine these prices,

to define procedures for computing and profit limit and deducting enterprises' profits exceeding it.

4. To provide for a phased raising of the rates of financial contributions towards the government social insurance scheme, which shall be made by enterprises, institutions and organisations, with regard to the timeframe set for implementing the USSR law 'On Pensions for Citizens in the USSR', as specified in the USSR Supreme Soviet resolution on procedures for enforcing the USSR law 'On Pensions for Citizens in the USSR', and, in this connection, to set the above rates for 1991 at 26 per cent. □

Gorbachev - ILO

PRESIDENT Mikhail Gorbachev received Director-General of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Michel Hansenne in the Kremlin on Friday, October 4. Hansenne's visit opens a new page in the development of relations between this long established organisation and the Soviet Union. This is also a sign of

(Continued on page 339)

IN THIS ISSUE

Joint Soviet-American statement for peace and security..... p338

Shevardnadze's interview in New York..... p339

Eduard Shevardnadze's speech to the 45th session of the UN General Assembly..... p340

German reunification: a Moscow viewpoint on October 3..... p343

Political aspect of privatisation..... p344

Joint Soviet-American statement for peace and security

The following is the full text of the joint Soviet-American statement adopted at the 45th UN General Assembly session on October 3:

THE 45th session of the United Nations General Assembly is taking place amidst the most profound changes in international affairs that have occurred since the Second World War. The confrontational nature of relations between East and West is giving way to a co-operative relationship and partnership. The United Nations is becoming a genuine centre for co-ordinated joint actions, and the Security Council is restoring its decisive role in efforts to promote international security, peacefully settle disputes and avert conflicts. Yet there remain many challenges to meet and problems to solve on the way to a peaceful and prosperous future.

Reaffirming the resolution presented last year by the United States and Soviet Union and unanimously adopted by the UN General Assembly, our two countries will attach special importance to promoting practical, multifaceted solutions to the issues of international peace and security, political, economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems.

To accomplish this we will pursue co-operation with all member-states in attainment of the following:

Strengthen the UN's efforts to promote international peace and security in all its aspects by working to improve UN peace-keeping, peace-making and crisis prevention functions and by encouraging more active use of the Secretary-General's good offices, help individual countries hold elections at their request:

- Establish a new sense of responsibility at the UN by encouraging the trend away from theoretical excess toward efforts to deal pragmatically with the major issues of the 1990s, including transnational issues like narcotics, the environment, development, terrorism, and human rights:

- Promote a new way of conducting diplomatic efforts within the UN system to eliminate duplicative programmes and activities and ensure that the UN system is utilised in the most efficient manner possible - we call this a 'unitary UN':

- Ensure the availability of sufficient resources to the UN for it to function effectively and efficiently by timely payment of financial obligations to the UN.

Promoting peace and security in all its aspects

Joint efforts have contributed significantly to the easing of tensions in southern Africa and Central America, and are part of efforts to prepare a peaceful settlement in Cambodia. But serious problems still remain. Our search continues for workable solutions to conflict and instability in the Persian Gulf, the Middle East, Afghanistan and El Salvador.

In the Persian Gulf, we face a most serious threat to the integrity of the emerging international system. The United States and the Soviet Union are working together with other members of the Security Council to fashion a concerted response, unprecedented in UN history, to this crisis. The swift reaction of the international community to Iraq's dangerous and unwarranted aggression serves as a sobering reminder to any future aggressor: the

international community will not tolerate the kind of wanton aggression which Iraq has committed. We call upon all United Nations members to continue to support the sanctions invoked by Security Council resolutions 661 and 670 until Iraq abides by the call of the Security Council to withdraw its forces from Kuwait immediately, totally and unconditionally.

The rapidly changing structure of international relations requires a United Nations that, while remaining faithful to its original purposes, can also respond flexibly and effectively to new challenges as they occur, like drugs, the environment, and the need to ensure the protection of human rights.

Tangible examples of the UN movement away from divisive rhetoric and political excess were last December's special session of the General Assembly on apartheid and the resumed session this month, where the world community underscored its resolute opposition to apartheid while agreeing, by consensus, on a positive approach based on dialogue among all South African parties. We will work for equally positive results at the General Assembly this year.

The UN special session on international economic co-operation in April 1990 also reflected the growing convergence of views worldwide on the need for more effective approaches to national economic development, in the context of a supportive international economic environment. Our two countries will continue working together to promote further conveyance in this direction. We will also support efforts to ensure careful and pragmatic preparation for the 1992 conference on environment and development. We want to see the conference fashion a realistic action plan to set the UN's course in the coming decades.

The United Nations is also actively promoting peace changes by helping individual countries hold free and just elections.

The United Nations help in Namibia and Nicaragua was exceptionally successful. There are also many other situations which require similar UN services. Our countries will work together with other UN member-countries and the Secretary General to structuralise UN help in organising elections and help the organisation effectively implement this new, important sphere of its activities.

Promoting a Unitary UN and Assuring Needed Financial Resources

An important area of our bilateral and multi-lateral co-operation has been the administration and management of the United Nations, particularly its budget. As major contributors to the United Nations, we believe it is essential that all views on the budget are taken into account, and that the agreement of all major contributors is required in order to approve the budget.

For there to be consensus, the UN system must improve the setting of priorities and improve co-ordination among various UN programmes. The aim should be to eliminate duplicative programmes and activities and ensure that the various components of the United Nations are utilised in the most efficient manner possible. For priority setting and co-ordination to be effective, members will need clearer and more comprehensive data on what the UN and the specialised agencies are doing with assessed and voluntary contributions.

Our two countries provide an important element of UN resources. As such, we recognise our responsibility to pay assessments promptly so that the United Nations has the resources

required to perform the tasks as expeditiously as possible, keeping in mind the necessity of strengthening the administrative and budgetary reforms that have taken place in recent years.

We intend to work for further enhancing the efficiency of the executive machinery of the organisation.

Establishing a new sense of responsibility for peace

The challenges before the international community and the UN are great. So, too, are the opportunities for more and better multilateral co-operation to confront and master the problem of our time.

In all spheres of UN activities, the renunciation of sterile and rigid positions dictated by ideology rather than by practicality constitutes an essential prerequisite for creating an atmosphere of confidence within the United Nations among all United Nations members.

The United Nations can play a leading role in issues of global concern. We will actively support efforts, throughout the UN system, to implement and strengthen the principles and the system of international peace, security and international co-operation laid down in the Charter. □

Soviet spokesman on relations with Israel

THE Soviet-Israeli agreement to convert their consular groups in Moscow and Tel Aviv into official consular establishments should be regarded "as a measure held in keeping with the current widening of ties" between the Soviet Union and Israel, Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman Yuri Gremitskikh told a news briefing in Moscow on October 2. The agreement was reached by Soviet and Israeli foreign ministers in New York on September 30.

The past few years, the spokesman said, have witnessed an intensification of humanitarian contacts between the USSR and Israel, mutual contacts between artists, scientists and representatives of news organisations.

The chambers of commerce and industry of the two countries have exchanged missions and the official Soviet news agency, TASS, is expected to open a bureau in Tel Aviv soon. Some union republics are developing direct contacts with Israel.

"The interests and rights of Soviet judicial persons and citizens require the relevant consular support which is part of the functions of the Soviet Foreign Ministry," Gremitskikh stressed.

"The Soviet consular group, currently in Tel Aviv, does not possess the necessary powers and possibilities due to the limitations of its mandate and make-up. In this context, a decision was taken to establish normal consular relations between the USSR and Israel." □

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Shevardnadze's interview in New York

"POSSIBLY, several facts pushed the United Nations to intensify its activity and enhanced this organisation's role in world affairs," Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze said in an interview with Soviet television and TASS journalists in New York on October 3.

"Of these facts I would like to single out the following two: the cold war is over, mankind is entering a new and peaceful period of its development.

"It is natural that the importance of the United Nations, its special role and place in handling international issues is being enhanced in these conditions.

"And the second factor: I mean the crisis in the Gulf. Obviously, the state of things in the world is rather contradictory. On the one hand, a new stage in world development has been defined, new inter-state relations are being built, and on the other, the crisis caused by Iraq's aggression against Kuwait.

"It is no exaggeration to state that all hopes are pinned today on the United Nations, on its activity in solving this problem. I cannot fail to note that the United Nations, the Security Council and the world community as a whole proved up to the task in this serious situation. I have in mind their adequate reaction, adequate actions in response to the developments.

"To support my statements, I could point to the sentiments prevailing at the current UN General Assembly session among its participants. I myself witnessed such sentiments. Participants en masse denounce the aggression and, what is of no less importance, member-countries of this world body are ready to act in concert, which makes it possible to hope that peace will be preserved. This is my main impression from the work of the present UN General Assembly session," Shevardnadze said.

"One more thing: I have already had an occasion to speak about this but I cannot avoid repeating it. Many heads of state and government, prominent public figures and politicians, all of us have attentively looked through the UN Charter once again and with great benefit for

ourselves. It seems that very wise people compiled this Charter. Everything necessary was incorporated into it. All conditions and provisions were defined for peace and life on the globe to be preserved.

"The Charter most thoroughly specifies the functions of the Security Council and other specialised UN Institutions and agencies, their potential and possibility to act effectively and decisively in necessary cases.

"The meeting of the foreign ministers of the CSCE member-states to prepare the 35-nation East-West summit in Paris has just ended. It was a preparatory meeting at a very representative level. It was, in turn, preceded by a large amount of preparatory work at the level of experts and working groups.

"We, the foreign ministers of 33 European countries, the United States and Canada, assembled in New York to review progress in preparations for the Paris CSCE summit. This was the first CSCE meeting of its kind to be held in the United States. I may say in principle that the Paris summit has been prepared. We endorsed its agenda and adopted two interesting documents – a communique of the New York meeting and a statement on the Gulf crisis.

"I should note that we have reached good mutual understanding on European institutions which are planned to be created in Paris. I would like to list some of them, primarily, in order to show that a new stage in building a new Europe is beginning in Paris," Shevardnadze said.

"First and foremost, a treaty to reduce conventional forces in Europe will be signed at the Paris summit. True, to put it frankly: not all issues have been solved here. But I am confident that solutions to unresolved problems will be found at my meeting with US Secretary of State James Baker.

"Presumably, a decision will be made in Paris to continue talks on a further reduction in conventional arms and on the beginning of talks to abolish tactical nuclear weapons," Shevardnadze said.

"In addition, in New York we succeeded to identify many important guideposts for the development of European processes. I would also like to point out that our proposal for the need to consider and endorse a declaration on NATO and the Warsaw Treaty and the new relationships between the two alliances enjoys support. The declaration seals a fundamentally new state in relations between the two groups – relations of co-operation rather than confrontation," Shevardnadze stressed.

"It is assumed, a decision will be made in Paris on the regular scheduling of such Europe-wide summits – approximately every two or three years. It is very important that a decision will be endorsed to create a CSCE centre for the prevention of conflicts, a small permanent secretariat to attend organisational matters and some other institutions and agencies.

"One may hope that the summit will highlight the need to create an assembly of Europe, possibly on the basis of the European Parliament or, perhaps, on another foundation," Shevardnadze said.

"I would like to emphasise in conclusion that the main point was and will be the building of a truly new Europe, the assertion of fundamentally new relations between the European states," Shevardnadze said.

"At our meeting in New York, the foreign ministers of 35 countries welcomed the treaty on the final settlement with respect to Germany. National festivities to mark the unification of the country are held in Germany. I have expressed my point of view on this issue on several occasions, including at the Soviet Parliament and at the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee.

"I am absolutely confident that the decision made by the great powers within the framework

of the 'two-plus-four' mechanism is the only correct decision, which determined the normal and painless process of that country's unification.

"Therefore, it would be right and fair to congratulate the German people, the German nation on this historic event. I presume that not all will agree with me on this issue, but I am absolutely convinced that the creation of the united Germany removes a serious seat of tension in Europe and makes an important contribution to the cause of stability, co-operation and unity on the continent, to the implementation of the plan to build a new and peaceful Europe," Shevardnadze concluded. □

Primakov meets Saddam

SOVIET Presidential Council member Yevgeni Primakov met Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in Baghdad on Friday, October 4.

Primakov gave Saddam Hussein a message from Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev in connection with the dangerous development of the situation in the Persian Gulf.

The Soviet envoy emphasised that the Soviet Union "favours a political settlement of the Gulf crisis, bearing in mind a return to the situation that existed before August 2."

"The settlement of the Kuwaiti crisis on this basis should give an impetus to the settlement of other conflicts in the region, above all the Arab-Israeli conflict."

On the instruction of the Soviet President, Primakov raised the issue of the departure from Iraq of Soviet specialists wishing to go home.

Saddam said the Iraqi side "has no political grounds for preventing artificially the return of Soviet people home" and that a large group of Soviet citizens will be able to leave within the next few days.

Primakov also met Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz. □

(Continued from page 337)

Gorbachev – ILO

profound changes in the world and in Soviet society, Gorbachev said.

In view of the Soviet Union's transition to a market economy it is highly desirable to co-operate with the organisation which has accumulated vast international experience in the area of labour relations, democratisation of economic structures, employment, social protection of the working people and relationships in the triad: state-enterprise-worker.

It is not enough to be open to the acceptance of the experience of others, it is necessary to be prepared for that, Gorbachev said. It is particularly important to consider the specific features of a country with its traditions, history, psychology of its peoples, its levels of development and potential and variety of its requirements. With this in mind only in this case can the exchange of experience be useful and take place at all. A mechanical transfer of foreign experience can only be harmful, he said. The hopes of some in the West that the Soviet Union will do just that are in vain.

The readiness of the ILO to broaden its co-operation with the Soviet Union at the present crucial stage of perestroika is regarded as a manifestation of solidarity, a particularly valuable quality in the present times, Gorbachev said.

Hansenne invited the Soviet President to be a guest of honour at the ILO general conference in the summer of 1991 and to speak there to express his vision of the world and of his country's role in international development. The proposal was accepted in principle. □

Law on Press

THE registration of periodicals in the Soviet Union under the Law on the Press, which came into effect on August 1, is an attempt to put things in order in the Soviet information industry, Alexander Gorkovlyuk, Deputy Chairman of the State Committee for the Press, told reporters in Moscow on October 3.

He said that more than 700 periodicals, including the publications of 13 parties, have already been registered.

The registration often provokes conflicts between the existing founders of a periodical and contenders for this status, Gorkovlyuk said. Many of the conflicts involve the division of property.

Many publications seek to get rid of their founders. One of these is the popular weekly *Argumenty i Fakty* (Arguments and Facts), with a circulation of over 30 million copies. The official said that the weekly would most likely detach itself from its founder – the Znaniye (Knowledge) Society.

One in seven registered publications are private, Gorkovlyuk said. However, the shortage of paper and printing equipment in the country complicates private publishing.

The official called for a state programme to modernise the printing industry to make the law on the press more efficient.

He said the registration of publications is to be completed by the end of the year. □

Eduard Shevardnadze's speech to the 45th session of the UN General Assembly

There follows the full text of the speech by Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze at the 45th UN General Assembly session on September 25.

Mr President,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

From the vantage point of this 45th session of the United Nations General Assembly, one might look back in amazement at how strikingly different is the terrain we have covered in just one year from the familiar landscape of the preceding four decades.

Politically, this was not just a calendar year but a light year in the history of the world.

The cold war, with its accompanying stress, psychoses and anticipation of disaster, is no longer a part of our life. Gone is the strain of daily confrontation, propaganda bickering and reciprocal threats.

This was the year during which pieces of the Berlin Wall were a popular souvenir. And now, an end has been put to the division of Europe and a final line drawn under the Second World War. The unification of the two German states is being completed. The "German question", this "great" and "classical" problem of world politics which only yesterday seemed intractable, has been resolved calmly and to mutual satisfaction.

Let me congratulate cordially and sincerely the German people on behalf of the Soviet people on this most important event in the history of this state, this nation and Europe.

Almost unnoticed, the military alliances have lost their enemies. They are beginning to build their relations on a new basis, moving away from confrontation which is being eroded by disarmament, lower defence spending, more wide-ranging confidence-building measures and the emergence of collective and co-operative security structures.

Unprecedented progress has been made in the peaceful resolution of regional conflicts by political means. In southern Africa the United Nations plan for the independence of Namibia has been implemented. The situation around Nicaragua has been settled, and a dynamic search for peace is under way in Cambodia, Afghanistan and other hot spots of the globe. We do not forget about Angola, Ethiopia, Cyprus, the Korean Peninsula and the Western Sahara. All this is being done with the most active participation of the United Nations.

These positive changes in the world have been propelled by a new relationship between the Soviet Union and the United States, which is evolving from co-operation to partnership and interaction. The meetings of the Soviet and US presidents at Malta, in Camp David and Helsinki were major events in world politics.

The political environment is clearly being defined by the global recognition of the supremacy of universal human values. Democratic forms are becoming established in running the affairs of states and in the conduct of international affairs.

The United Nations too is being reborn. We are pleased to note that President Mikhail Gorbachev's ideas concerning the role of the organisation in the changing world have been seen to reflect majority opinion and the real needs of the international community.

The central concepts of today's politics are co-operation, interaction and partnership in facing the global challenges of combating economic backwardness, poverty and social inequality and protecting the environment.

Had this session taken place before last Au-

gust, we would have had every reason to say that mankind had cleared a narrow and dangerous passage and had wide and glowing horizons ahead of it.

But now our field of vision has been obscured by the dark cloud of aggression against Kuwait. On that black Thursday Iraq flagrantly violated the United Nations Charter, the principles of international law, the universally recognised norms of morality and the standards of civilised behaviour. Iraq has committed an unprovoked aggression, annexed a neighbouring sovereign state, seized thousands of hostages and resorted to unprecedented blackmail, threatening to use weapons of mass destruction.

There is also another dimension to Iraq's action. It has dealt a blow to all that mankind has recently achieved, all that we have been able to accomplish together, by adopting the new political thinking as our guide to the future.

An act of terrorism has been perpetrated against the emerging new world order. This is a major affront to mankind. Unless we find a way to respond to it and cope with the situation, our civilisation will be thrown back by half a century.

The Security Council reacted rapidly and with determination, as required by the nature and dimensions of the threat. There is no doubt that it expressed the will of the international community.

Iraq's actions are having and will have the gravest consequences for the people of Iraq and for millions of men, women and children in many countries of the world, for their hopes and their future. War may break out in the Gulf region any day, at any moment.

From this rostrum we would like to appeal once again to the leaders of Iraq. We are doing it as their old friends and as a country that has found the courage to condemn its wrong-doings against certain states in the past. We call upon them to hear reason, to obey the demands of the law and also of plain common sense, to take a responsible and humane attitude, above all vis-à-vis the Iraqi people, who surely yearn for peace, tranquility and good relations with their neighbours.

We also hope that at this time of grave trial the Arab states will live up to the expectations of mankind and help to find a way out of the Persian Gulf crisis. This would make it possible to deal with other hotbeds of conflict in the Middle East, and to find an equitable solution to the Palestinian problem.

If the world has survived to this day, it is because at tragic moments in its history the forces of evil were always opposed by the forces of good, arbitrary power by the rule of law, treachery and meanness by honour and decency, and violence by the strength of the spirit and the belief in justice.

Today is no time for rejoicing, but one cannot help being satisfied at the unprecedented unity of the Security Council and the clear attitude of the international public opinion in the face of Iraq's behaviour. This gives us confidence in the ability of the United Nations to deal with this grave international crisis. The positions taken by members of this organisation give the Security Council the mandate to go as far as the interests of world peace will require.

Some may find that Iraq is being judged by a different, higher standard than that applied to other countries even in the quite recent past. My

answer is this: it is good that we have reached this point. It is good that we have adopted a universal human yardstick of good and evil; that we are calling aggression by its proper name and consider it necessary to condemn and punish its perpetrator and to help the victim of injustice.

These days are a trying time, a test for our organisation. If it passes this test it will immeasurably enhance its prestige, gain new experience and new capabilities. There is no doubt that it will use them to restore peace and justice in other conflict situations and to ensure the implementation of its resolutions bearing on all regional problems.

An approach based on mankind's common interest does not permit any other kind of behaviour. From now on the world community intends to act by a common set of standards.

International relations are being freed from the vestiges of the cold war which for many years had a negative effect on the international legal order. We are again becoming the United Nations and are returning to our own global constitution – the Charter of the United Nations, to those of its provisions that were forgotten for a while but have been proven to be indispensable for the most important of our tasks – the maintenance of international peace and security. The establishment of the principles of the new thinking in world politics has enabled us to start implementing the effective measures of persuasion and enforcement provided in the Charter.

In the context of recent events we should remind those who regard aggression as an acceptable form of behaviour that the United Nations has the power to "suppress acts of aggression". There is ample evidence that this right can be exercised. It will be, if the illegal occupation of Kuwait continues. There is enough unity in this regard in the Security Council, and there is also the will and a high degree of consensus in the world community.

Of course, before – and I reiterate – before this all political, peaceful, non-military forms of pressure must be applied to the aggressor, obviously in combination with economic and other enforcement measures.

In a way, the Gulf crisis is not just a tragedy and an extremely dangerous threat to peace; it is also a serious challenge for all of us to review the ways and means of maintaining security, the methods of protecting law and order on our planet, the mechanisms for controlling the processes which affect the state of human civilisation in the broadest meaning of this term, and the role of the United Nations in this process.

Like any other democratically operating organisation, the United Nations can function effectively if it has a mandate from its members, if states agree on a voluntary and temporary basis to delegate to it a portion of their sovereign rights and to entrust it with performing certain tasks in the interests of the majority.

It cannot be otherwise in today's world. Only in this way can we make the period of peace lasting and irreversible and follow up on our initial success in bringing about a healthier climate in international relations.

Life poses new challenges. What will be needed in the first place is, in our view, a theoretical and conceptual reassessment of the political, technological, economic, environmental, humanitarian and cultural realities of the modern world and of its human dimension. The world is

consolidating on the basis of universal human values. Partnership is replacing rivalry. It is becoming the basis for relations between many countries that used to regard each other as adversaries.

Partnership is not just a fashionable term. It became evident during the latest crisis and underlined the close and constructive interaction among the permanent members of the Security Council. But the decline of East-West rivalry as a real or perceived factor in international relations may bring to the arena of world politics new figures and new phenomena. One such phenomenon we will probably have to deal with its claims to regional hegemony.

Among the issues assuming a critical importance for the future of mankind are the non-proliferation of nuclear, chemical, bacteriological and missile technologies and, more generally, the disproportionate growth of the military sector in some economies and societies.

Even in the past the doctrines of the "balance of terror" and "nuclear deterrence" were questionable means of maintaining peace and security. In the new conditions they will simply become irrelevant.

We need to define the criteria of defence sufficiency. The Iraqi aggression would seem to make it difficult even to discuss this. After all, what can be sufficient in the face of the irrational? On the other hand, the aggression has once again underscored the validity of the argument that no nation should have the exclusive prerogative or absolute freedom to determine its own level of armament. Any other approach would result in an unbridled arms race and all-out militarisation. We must look toward different principles, towards an accommodation of reciprocal concerns and a balance of armaments at the lowest possible levels.

We in the Soviet Union have the unfortunate experience of building up a redundant defence capability. This was due more to an erroneous assessment of the situation and a desire to protect the country against any eventuality than to any evil intent or aggressiveness. At the time, we and our adversaries took an overly "arithmetical" approach to military parity. Of course, parity is needed for global stability, but it should not go beyond the limits of reasonable defence sufficiency.

We have drawn and continue to draw appropriate conclusions for ourselves. It is now common knowledge that militarisation is wasteful for any country and can be ruinous when taken to extremes.

In the longer term, the world community will need to monitor power of states, arms supplies and transfers of military technology. Such an approach will be in everyone's interests and will strengthen stability and trust. Otherwise, we will continue to be confronted with armed conflicts and attempts to intimidate and blackmail. Above all it will be necessary to keep a close watch on those countries that make determined efforts to build up the offensive capabilities of their armed forces. Moreover, to have them explain why this is being done.

Of course, the United Nations itself will have to play the primary role in this. But the organisation will need effective support from regional security structures which are already becoming a reality in Europe, and which we hope will emerge in Asia and the Pacific, in the Middle East, in Central America and elsewhere in the world.

We might consider the idea of introducing on a global and regional level the international registration of certain types of armaments that are produced or acquired. There is a need for transparency in this area.

We need to agree on principles governing the sale and supply of arms. Such attempts were made in the past, but unfortunately they were not carried through.

In our view, we must urgently request the Geneva conference on disarmament to address this issue and submit recommendations to the

next session of the General Assembly.

Two years ago the Soviet delegation raised the issue of reactivating the work of the Security Council's Military Staff Committee. Recent developments have convinced us of the need to return to the original idea conceived by the founders of this organisation and of its Charter.

We know why the Military Staff Committee has never become a functioning body. During the cold war the committee could not and did not have a role to play. Now, however, we see that without substantive recommendations from this body the Security Council is unable to carry out its functions under the Charter.

The architects of our organisation proceeded from the harsh realities of the Second World War and were right in assuming that for the organisation to be effective in keeping peace and preventing war, it must have the means to enforce its decisions and, if necessary, to suppress aggression, and have a mechanism for preparing and co-ordinating such actions.

The Soviet delegation believes that the Security Council must take the necessary organisational steps to be able to act in strict conformity with the provisions of the charter.

It should begin by initiating steps to reactivate the work of the Military Staff Committee and study the practical aspects of assigning national military contingents to serve under the authority of the council.

The Soviet Union is prepared to conclude an appropriate agreement with the Security Council. We are sure that the other permanent members of the council and states that might be approached by it will do the same.

If the Military Staff Committee worked properly, if appropriate agreements had been concluded between the council and its permanent members, and if other organisational aspects of countering threats to peace had been worked out, there would be no need for individual states to act unilaterally. After all, however justified they might be, such actions provoke a mixed response, create problems for those same states and may not be acceptable to all.

By contrast, there is no reason to object to steps taken by legitimate international "law-enforcement bodies" — the Security Council and its Military Staff Committee.

We should not underestimate even the psychological effect of the Security Council acquiring structures and forces to counter aggression.

I would like to emphasise that the use of force is only possible as a last resort. We must rely on non-military, political means and pursue our objectives in a peaceful manner. Today more than ever before it is these methods that are becoming effective.

The latest crisis has dramatically illustrated the importance of preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

To be frank, the situation is beginning to cause alarm. Let us face it: cracks have appeared in the nuclear non-proliferation regime, the IAEA is having difficulty expanding the zone of application of its safeguards. It is time to trigger off the emergency systems in order to save the situation. As a matter of utmost urgency, nuclear tests must be stopped. If testing is stopped, we have a chance to survive; otherwise the world will perish. We need to tell people about it frankly, without taking refuge in all sorts of specious arguments. Should we perhaps invite the parliaments of all countries to express their attitude to nuclear explosions?

What else has to happen to set in motion the elimination of chemical weapons? The Soviet Union and the United States are setting an example by doing so on a bilateral basis. But what about the others? It is really odd that while there is no person, no politician who would publicly call for retaining toxic agents, things are at a standstill.

Should we perhaps ask for a roll-call vote right in this room to see who votes against? If everyone is in favour, let us just work out a binding

schedule for completing the work on the convention and set a time-frame for the destruction of chemical weapons. Similar problems, mostly concerning verification, arise with regard to biological weapons.

Swift action is needed on all these issues, yet the debate at the Geneva conference on disarmament proceeds in a quiet and leisurely manner. Should this be tolerated? Even as dangerous developments are gaining critical momentum in the world, the negotiations continue at a pace that was set at the time of the cold war.

I think the negotiations at the Palais des Nations in Geneva should pull up the blinds. Let them see what is going on outside and let people know what those disarmament pundits are reflecting upon.

I don't want to offend anyone. I know that eminent people work there. But what is to be done? The time has come to cry out.

I cannot fail to mention yet another aspect of security.

The world community should also consider the possibility of various "unconventional situations" arising from the mass taking of hostages and cases of blackmail involving particularly dangerous and destructive weapons.

These problems will have to be addressed at two levels — technical and legal. We could start out by setting up a group of experts for contingency planning under the Security Council.

The group could include experts on combating terrorism, psychologists, nuclear physicists, chemists, physicians, disaster relief workers, experts on the physical protection of facilities, and so on.

Recommendations regarding the management of "unconventional situations" should be made known to a limited number of people. The Security Council may find it necessary, upon recommendation of the Military Staff Committee, to establish a rapid response force to be formed on a contract basis from units specially designated by different countries, including the five permanent members of the Security Council. This idea also deserves discussion.

But technical methods alone are not enough to deal with such things. In our view there is an urgent need to institute a new norm in international law which would declare the threat by any individual for the purposes of blackmail of using weapons of mass destruction, hostage-taking or mass terror to be a crime against humanity. Such work is currently underway somewhere in the labyrinths of this organisation, but so far inconclusively.

What we need, however, is to create as soon as possible a moral and legal environment in which anyone guilty of grave crimes against humanity, of participating in atrocities, in taking hostages, acts of terrorism or torture, and those guilty of particular ruthlessness in the use of force, could not escape punishment and would not be absolved from personal responsibility even if they acted under orders.

The principle of suppressing aggression and threats to peace should, in our view, be complemented with the principle of individual responsibility and commensurate punishment.

This is a difficult question from the legal standpoint. An advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice should be sought on this subject. Incidentally, we would be in favour of enhancing the role of that body and would welcome a more up-to-date interpretation of its competence.

The Gulf crisis is causing a major dislocation in the entire system of world economy. Its true magnitude is even difficult to assess now. It is clear the consequences will be severe for the economies of the developing countries, particularly the poorest of them, those burdened by large foreign debt. Merely stating this is not enough. Action must be taken without delay. It is necessary to establish as soon as possible an international machinery, maybe a temporary one for the time being, for example under the auspices of the International Monetary Fund or

the World Bank, to mitigate the negative consequences of this crisis for countries which are in a particularly vulnerable position.

We are of the view that sounding out the economic repercussions of the crisis should be primarily the function of the United Nations. The organisation should be the centre of action in situations affecting the interests of many countries.

The Soviet Union as a major oil-producing and energy-exporting country will be prepared to co-operate in implementing measures under the auspices of the United Nations or of any other international body, aimed at stabilising the economic situation in the world. This should not be a matter of individual steps of a mostly charitable nature to assist individual countries. What is needed is a global policy of stabilisation and compensation.

History, particularly modern history, teaches all kinds of lessons. They should not be ignored or underestimated. One of them is that security can hardly be lasting unless it is supported by economic growth combined with spiritual health and by traditional cultural values combined with new technologies and a concern for the environment.

Hence the need for co-operation in the 1990s to be geared to the resolution of the entire set of global economic and environmental problems. A new, "poverty curtain", this time between North and South, must not be allowed to fall. If it does, the division of the world that will follow may prove fatal to our civilisation. We have no time to lose. A global strategy for development and for solving universal problems is needed now. The United Nations, supported by its specialised agencies and by outside intellectual resources, should take the lead in formulating such a strategy.

An intermediate world calls for a new level of multilateral economic partnership. Co-operation on a bilateral basis and in selected areas is no longer enough.

The Special Session of the General Assembly on International Economic Co-operation has clearly shown that everybody would gain if each group of countries were to adjust its approaches and show willingness to forsake individual or group self-interest in economic co-operation, setting as its highest priority the interests of the common good, "a global self-interest" if you will, which would no longer be selfish.

We welcome the provisions of the Declaration of the Special Session which support the integration of the USSR and East European countries into the world economy. We hope that the United Nations will give concrete expression to its support for this process.

The Soviet contribution to these efforts will certainly be growing as we move ahead with perestroika at home, deepen our economic reform and switch over to a market economy. We have firmly opted for a closer association with GATT, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, with a view to joining them as soon as the necessary internal and external conditions are in place.

We can also see a unique contribution that we can make to the development of international co-operation. For geographical and other reasons we are in a better position than others to serve as a link between Europe and Asia and to contribute to the establishment of a single Eurasian space in the economic, scientific, technological, environmental and other areas. This could be facilitated, for instance, by Soviet communication lines and equipment, including space communication systems.

Scientific and technological progress has become a major factor shaping the world's future. The global nature of its implications places in a new perspective the need to co-ordinate national policies in this area. The United Nations and its system of organisational can and must, in our view, assume a leading role in these efforts.

This is an area in which trust among states is

of special importance. Without trust, the barriers to international scientific and technological co-operation cannot be dismantled. We think that the international community should take a stand against monopolism in the field of science and technology. Without that, it will be difficult to deal effectively with underdevelopment and the numerous problems of the developing world.

If we succeeded in really focusing the global development strategy on scientific and technological progress, we could substantially mitigate such alarming trends as the brain drain, the growing professional migration, and the rising cost and narrowing scope of research.

The United Nations would do well to take the lead in organising a wide-ranging discussion on the role of thought, science and technology in addressing the problems of today's world. The USSR is ready to host such a discussion.

Much has been said lately on environmental issues. We even run the risk of "talking away" our future, for until now very little has been done at the global level, while the destruction of the environment is outstripping our preparations to deal with the threat.

I hope that even as we continue to prepare for the 1992 Conference on the Environment and Development in Brazil, we will be able to start implementing specific environmental projects.

In our view, one of the priority measures would be to establish a United Nations centre for emergency environmental assistance. We have submitted to the Secretary General a list of Soviet scientists and specialists whom, upon the centre's request, we will be ready to send at our expense as part of international expert teams to areas of environmental disasters.

We are well aware that a healthy environment requires considerable investment both at the national and global level. As we see it, the way to go forward is to reduce military expenditures and to promote conversion in the defence production sector. There is no alternative. The figures are well known. Eight-hundred billion dollars must be spent before the end of this century to avert environmental degradation. That sum is almost equal to what the world spends on the military each year.

The Chernobyl tragedy has highlighted the urgency of environmental protection problems. We are grateful to the governments and various agencies which are joining in the hard work of dealing with the consequences of the disaster.

On behalf of the Soviet people I also wish to express our gratitude to all international, governmental and public organisations and private citizens who have offered their help to the victims.

Our special thanks go to UNESCO and to those countries and organisations that reached out so movingly to Chernobyl's children, inviting them to come for rest and medical treatment and sharing with them the warmth of their hearts. The Secretary General's decision to designate a Special Representative for Chernobyl Disaster Relief has been greatly appreciated in our country.

The multi-dimensional approach to security supported by our organisation brings into focus the interrelationship between the security of states and the well-being and freedom of the individual. The human being is coming to the fore and the human dimension is becoming a universal yardstick for any international initiative. For us and for the United Nations the security of the individual, of every citizen and the protection of fundamental human rights are inseparable from the national security of states and international security as a whole.

I think the time had also come to look at regional conflicts from the standpoint of human rights. Those rights include the right to life and personal safety as well as the right to enjoy fundamental freedoms and to participate in the democratic process of government.

The main task for the international community is to create conditions in which people would be able to make a free choice. Disputes

must be settled through the ballot box, not in the trenches of war.

Speaking about the future, we would also like to respond to those who are following with understandable concern the developments in our country. It is true that our domestic situation is not at all simple and still far from stable.

But, whatever the complexity of our situation, one has to see that it is evolving against the background of the emancipation of their national identities by all of our country's nations. They are opening themselves to the world and the world is discovering them.

That this process is accompanied by certain difficulties and even losses should be no reason for excessive alarm, because the Soviet people and the democratic forces that are assuming responsibility for the future of our union are aware of the Soviet Union's place in the world and of its responsibility for the maintenance of global stability. This awareness is shared by all the nations in our multinational country, and they will all act responsibly, realising that stability in the world will also mean peace in their own home.

In working for the renewal of our society we have seen how important it is to defend democratic principles at all levels, domestically and internationally.

If attempts to embark on the path of democracy were to end in failure or, worse still, in defeat, it would have grave consequences for the world's future, not to mention the risk of chaos and new dictatorships.

To prevent that should be in everyone's interest.

Today the humane goal formulated by Kant two centuries ago has special relevance for all of us: "The greatest challenge for the human race, which nature compels it to meet, is to attain a universal civic society based on the rule of law."

The key to this lies in strengthening the existing instruments of humanitarian co-operation, in the universal observance of international covenants on human rights and in the improvement of international humanitarian monitoring procedures.

As we meet for our organisation's 45th General Assembly, we are speaking not so much of its maturity but of the beginning of its rebirth, its restoration according to the blueprints of 1945. And, wiping off the grime left by the cold war, we see a work of collective wisdom. The United Nations devised their organisation as an instrument of action. We must see to it that from now on all of us gear our words to joint actions. This is what our time is all about. The philosophy of today is a philosophy of action.

This is the sixth time I have spoken from this rostrum, and the sixth time I have attended a session of the General Assembly. It has been a great, a first-rate school.

Where else can one become so closely involved with the entire gamut of human problems and encounter such a constellation of personalities, intellectuals, professionals and scholars whose brilliant qualities are epitomised by the Secretary General of our organisation, Mr Perez de Cuellar?

I consider myself very fortunate to have met and worked here with real political leaders and great men during the years when the United Nations returned to what it was meant to be - a centre for harmonising the activities of nations. □

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German reunification: a Moscow viewpoint on October 3

By Vadim Zagladin

LET it not be taken as a paradox, but Soviet policy was confronted with the question of German unity or division even during the years of World War II. In 1941 Stalin uttered the now famous phrase: "Hitlers come and go, but the German people and the German state remain."

The possibility (or even advisability) of Germany's division into several states was examined in the Western member-countries of the anti-Hitler coalition as long as as 1942-43. The motives of the authors of projects differed respectively. Some proceeded from the desire to prevent a repetition of German aggression. Others viewed Germany's division as a brake on the revival of Germany's economic might and for competition on its part. In the postwar years, the cold war gradually gaining momentum had an appreciable imprint on the West's German policy.

Naturally, Moscow was faced with the question: how to react to all these ideas, which were then discussed at various levels, including the meetings of the big three. Already by the Teheran meeting, the Soviet side expressed the view that a division of the German state was capable of giving rise to challenging issues: indeed, the German people would certainly aspire to restore their unity.

At the Potsdam Conference, the view on the need to preserve a single Germany prevailed, but on the condition of its denazification, demilitarisation and democratisation. Very soon, however, the allies began to differ over the matter. In 1947, Germany was divided *de facto*, and in 1949, as the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic were formed, *de jure*.

Afterwards, however, the Soviet Union put forward various options for Germany's reunification, provided the Potsdam agreements were observed and the country's neutralisation was ensured. If I am not mistaken, a similar option was last proposed in 1958. But the West declined the Soviet offers: the logic of the cold war made itself felt.

There are no doubts that the division of a single – and ethnically homogeneous – state was a tragedy.

The division of Germany was, indeed, no advantage to the rest of Europe, either. The point is not that it symbolised as it were the division of Europe, the excruciating condition it found itself in against the background of East-West military confrontation. The crisis situations concerning Germany, in the first place, Berlin, fraught with the most serious consequences had repeatedly arisen.

There was awareness of this both in the East and in the West, I think. There was awareness of this, in the first place, in the FRG and the GDR (though this was glossed over in East Berlin, for understandable reasons, on the contrary, it was asserted that the division was a good thing). But it was inconceivable to overcome the obtaining situation as long as the two parts of Europe had a great many missiles targeted upon each other.

Everything changed, when the situation began to evolve. Thanks to Soviet perestroika's renewed foreign policy in many respects, the past five years became the period of a gradual recession in confrontation and then of its actual termination, a start was also made to real progress towards phasing out the military confrontation.

This process was bound to have a most diverse

impact on both relations between states and their domestic affairs. Much is yet to be thought out and analysed here, all the more so as, I am convinced, far from all the effect of detente – both international and domestic – have already fully revealed themselves. Much still lies ahead.

The course of events, particularly in 1989 and the beginning of 1990, is well known: none of the countries of Eastern and Central Europe was able to sidestep far-reaching changes of a revolutionary character. As a rule, all of them began thanks to the clear-cut, explicit desire of their peoples. These changes, I gather, are still far from having been completed, many processes in Eastern Europe have not yet manifested themselves in full. There is an exception, however. It was the German Democratic Republic, which ceased to exist on October 3, 1990, merging with the Federal Republic of Germany as its organic part. Here, everything seems to have been settled (though the transition from the old system, which existed for 41 years, to the new one may not be quite simple and easy for residents of the GDR).

From the moment of the fall of the Berlin Wall, the question of the FRG's and the GDR's unity moved into the foreground as a practical task. Had anyone expected this? Well, yes and no. Political leaders and scientists both in the West and the USSR had been aware that reunification of the two Germanys would eventually take place, but almost no one thought that this could happen so soon.

The situation was not at all simple. Leafing through the files of Western newspapers for last year, one can easily see that understanding was expressed that the reunification of the two Germanys was inevitable and that it was impossible to prevent it, but no one was particularly delighted with that. In some instances, the question was asked (directly or indirectly): wouldn't the united Germany revive the old dangers, long since known to Europe? In others, apprehensions were expressed about the economic might of a future united state that could become a dominant force in Europe.

Frankly speaking, I got the impression from talks with Western politicians that the West was hoping that Moscow would apply the brakes, for the Soviet Union stopping or at least dragging out the process of reunification for a long time.

Evidently, these hopes were expressed with an eye to the grim imprints on Soviet history by the Second World War, which took a heavy toll of 27 million lives. Indeed, as public opinion polls (already by the end of last year) showed, more than 50 per cent of Soviet citizens treated the prospect of Germany's unity with understanding, whereas a quarter to one third of them voiced their doubts. That held true of not only war veterans (incidentally, many of them declared for reunification at once, for the need to write finis to the sombre chapters of the past), but also young people.

Apprehensions about the two Germanys' reunification were also voiced earlier this year, too, including in the legislative bodies of the country, its parliament, at the forums of the CPSU and other political associations.

These apprehensions, I must say, were warmed up by the speeches of those referred to as "ewig gestrige" (forever yesterday's), that is, advocates of reviving the Reich within the 1937 borders. Even if there are not many people like that (by the way, they were even more active in the GDR than in the FRG), they are not giving up their designs. Quite recently, a group of MPs from the CDU-CSU led by the Chairman of Verband der Landmannschaften (Union of the

Provincial Comradeship Societies) of the FRG made an attempt to torpedo the ratification of a treaty on the restoration of Germany's unity, demanding that the Constitutional Court of the FRG should repeal a number of articles therein making it plain that a new Germany renounced claims to certain territories held by Poland, Czechoslovakia and the USSR. Naturally, the Constitutional Court rejected the demand.

Soviet public opinion gave serious thought to the West-formulated demand for a reunified Germany's membership of NATO. Of course, these thoughts were echoes of the old way of thinking, which habitually reduced everything to the alignment of military forces. On the other hand, however, NATO really remains the same as it had been in the years of confrontation. Naturally, the question arose: what aim does the West pursue?

Of course, the Soviet leadership had to take all those sentiments into account. But not with a view to creating obstacles to the FRG's and the GDR's reunification. Indeed, perestroika has announced as a basic principle of its foreign policy the right of nations to decide their own destiny. How could then the USSR deny this right to the German people?

The Soviet leadership also proceeded from the premise that, as the 1975 Helsinki Final Act envisaged the right of every country to independently choose its allies and to decide what alliances it wants to be a party to, we could not raise barriers to a free choice by a reunited Germany.

I am aware that the reader might put this question to me: this being so, why then did the Soviet Union's first object to Germany's membership of NATO? Why did it make the proposal now on Germany's neutrality, now on its simultaneous admission to the two alliances – NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organisation? And why, after putting forward these ideas, did it give up the effort towards putting them into effect and agreed to a reunified Germany's membership of the North Atlantic Alliance?

Those are legitimate questions. I wouldn't say that any country's foreign policy never shows all of its cards at once and that the price offered at the start of negotiations on practically any question is usually 'overstated', because all that is widely known. I'll tell of the logic of our actions instead.

I repeat it that we proceeded from the premise that Germany's unity was inevitable, that we should not interfere with it and that it is impossible to prevent its joining NATO, if it itself wishes to do so. This means that the practical task before our policy was limited to one thing: to ensure the creation of such conditions and to bring about such changes on the European political scene that would meet as far as possible the interests of our country's security. But these interests on the whole are concurrent with the interests of all European states.

What conditions and what changes had to be discussed?

First of all, as far as Germany itself is concerned, we were interested to see a lower level of its arms potential than the one that existed at the moment when the process of reunification had been started, to see the obligation earlier assumed by both the GDR and the FRG not to have and not to produce weapons of mass destruction: nuclear, chemical and bacteriological, consolidated.

Further, it was essential to consolidate the principle of the inviolability of frontiers. Here, our Polish neighbours were particularly worried.

(Continued on next page)

Political aspect of privatisation

By Vyacheslav Kostikov, *Novosti* political commentator

UNTIL recently, we used the word 'privatisation' only with respect to the West, most often in negative contexts, as an onslaught by private capital and its political backers against "the gains of the working people".

Now that the USSR is preparing to switch to a market economy, privatisation is seen as a key notion and the crucial instrument by means of which to dismantle the USSR's over-centralised state-owned and state-controlled economy. Heated debates continue on the scale and methods of privatisation because the ideology-affected minds of ordinary Soviets and some of their leaders perceive privatisation as a comeback for capitalism.

The idea of privatisation meets with little enthusiasm because for over 70 years Soviet society was taught to negate private property. Resistance to privatisation would have been greater if the country had not been afflicted by a profound crisis. The public's discontent, its being sick and tired of daily domestic problems, long queues and dramatic shortages of essentials have been so great, especially over the past few months that, despite ideological stupor, people would accept any concept if only it were workable and effective.

For all that, rigid Party and state structures would offer considerable resistance to privatisation, especially in the provinces. Power politics, a strong president's power, in particular, would be needed to overcome this resistance. That was why the recent law, adopted by the USSR Supreme Soviet and giving President Gorbachev more power for the start of the switch-over to a

market economy (until March 31, 1992), was applauded even by those MPs who are suspicious of the idea of extended presidential power, fearing this could lead to a civilian dictatorship.

Throwing aside such suspicions, understandable as they are from the viewpoint of a lamentable Soviet historical record, the very transition to a market economy and the privatisation of state property would be good for democracy strategically. In this respect, as a market advocate, the President could have expected greater understanding on the part of the democratic radicals. Unfortunately, the long-term aspects of Gorbachev's policy are not always grasped and rarely appreciated in the heat of political struggle and confrontations over trivial matters, typical of today's Soviet parliamentary activities.

Made euphoric by glasnost and political pluralism, democrats and liberals overestimate, willy-nilly, the potentialities of today's 'pluralism'. To be frank, the hopes which the reformists pinned onto new political parties, and, hence new political forces, have materialised only in part.

Dozens of new political parties have come into being in the USSR. However, they are still in an embryonic state. Nowadays political influence is wielded not so much by the new political parties as by the personalities making up the pivots of these parties.

Several reasons lie behind the slow growth of the new political parties' membership. One of them is the public's obvious weariness with empty political talk, people's doubts that the democrats would free the country from crisis, and the dependence of citizens who think more about

food for today than about politics, and a general crisis of trust in politics and politicians. Significantly, students, numerous as they are in the USSR, remain politically passive and infantile despite the efforts of radicals to activate this potentially dynamic group. Soviet students constitute a striking contrast to the explosive temperament of the Eastern European students who were a major driving force of reforms in their countries.

However, the main reason is the absence of material motivations, the absence of a large class which has something to uphold and something to lose. I mean the class of property owners.

The political product of the President's privatisation policy would be a vast group of small and medium property owners at present non-existent in the USSR. Eventually, this group will form the political basis of liberalism taking shape in the country today. As soon as people acquire property interests, they will demonstrate the desire to uphold these interests and represent them in the elected bodies of government. This desire is absent nowadays. The new political parties are the fruit of political strife, rather than economic interests. They aim not at upholding the interests of one public group or another, but at destroying the monopoly stand of the Soviet Communist Party and bureaucracy. This explains why these parties are not yet massive.

The future of political pluralism and the creation of massive base for a fragile Soviet democracy depend on the success or setback of privatisation. The sooner the democrats will see this interdependence, the better this will be for political stabilisation at home. □

(Continued from previous page)

But other states also closely followed the development of events around this problem. The French President Francois Mitterrand, the British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and the US President George Bush were insistent in expressing their wishes aloud, in the first place, precisely concerning the border with Poland.

We understood it well that all this could not be achieved through pressure or dictation. It is unacceptable to lower the dignity of any nation. As far as Germany is concerned, all of us, very likely, remember that precisely the humiliation of Germany by the 1919 Treaty of Versailles became one of the arguments of Hitler and Nazi propaganda in favour of preparations for a war of aggression.

And now for those things which concern NATO. We were worried, not could it be otherwise, about the fact that in the period when the Warsaw Treaty Organisation took the initiative and started taking steps towards arms and force reductions (doing so unilaterally), formulated a purely defensive military doctrine and then began to discuss the question of turning it from the military-political into a politico-military alliance. NATO remained unchanged. It continued to be as it had been in the years of the cold war and confrontation. Its military doctrines and strategic plans, essentially oriented towards a conflict with the East, with the USSR, also remained intact. Under the new circumstances, both we (and not only we) believed that NATO, too, should take the road of change. Simultaneously, its relations with the Warsaw Treaty Organisation and its members should also change.

And, lastly, we (and not only we) believed that, if the division of Germany is ended, the division of Europe, too, should end. The ideas of the Helsinki Final Act: to build a new system of security and co-operation in Europe, should begin to be put into effect. And this should proceed at least in parallel with the emergence

of German unity and changes in NATO.

All of our intermediate proposals (which, I must say, were never put forward in the form of official documents, but were set out in Soviet leaders' speeches and interviews) were aimed at finding the best ways of attaining the said objectives.

Our Western partners at once shared the Soviet position on some questions, while it took them a long time to ponder over others. A very happy forum was found for deciding questions connected with the external aspects of Germany's reunification: the meeting of foreign ministers of the FRG and GDR and the four victorious powers in World War II: the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, the United States and France (it was referred to as the two-plus-four formula).

As a result of a great deal of work, at times hard but on the whole well-concerted, all questions concerning the external aspects of Germany's unity were decided to meet the basic demands of security for the USSR and the other European countries.

On September 12, the six foreign ministers signed in Moscow the treaty on a final German settlement, where the sides recorded their agreement with the terms on which German unity shall be effected. The process of reunification was thus a peaceful one, taking place in the conditions of co-operation and mutual understanding among the parties concerned. The USSR Supreme Soviet Committee on International Affairs has lately examined the treaty and decided to submit it for ratification by the Soviet Parliament.

Another process was under way simultaneously. The NATO Council session in London passed resolutions testifying to a start to changing the character and doctrines of the alliance. After the session, mutual understanding was reached on the advisability of drafting and signing by the NATO countries and the Warsaw Treaty member-states a declaration finalising a changeover from confrontation to co-operation

between them. The declaration is to be signed in November.

A whole chapter of European history, at times a grim one, is thus drawing to a close. Germany's reunification is, on the one hand, an expression of change in Europe. On the other hand, it opens the way to further positive changes, to a Europe of peace and co-operation. It is to be hoped that the meeting of heads of state and governments of the 35 participating states of the Helsinki Process in Paris, planned for November 19, 1990, will fix the route of such changes.

Let's not guess how the CSCE process will specifically develop in the future. We would like to see it move forward successfully and without unnecessary delays. The furtherance of this process, as we are convinced, will be facilitated, among other things, by the development of new relations between the USSR and a united Germany. On September 13, a document was initialled in Moscow on the principles of these relations: the Treaty of Good-neighbourliness, Partnership and Co-operation between the USSR and the FRG, which, after the process of reunification is completed, will become a treaty between the USSR and Germany.

"We are looking to the future of Soviet-German relations with optimism," the Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev said. "What is very important is that a major factor of these relations for the future - that of trust - took shape in good time. We can, I am confident of this, have normal, good-neighbourly and diverse relations with that great nation in the interests of both peoples, the peoples of Europe and all the world."

It stands to reason that Soviet-German relations will not affect the Soviet Union's relations with all European countries. On the contrary, all these relations taken together will help lay a solid foundation for a new and peaceful Europe of co-operation and co-development in the interests of man. (Novosti, abridged) □