

Mikhail
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ADDRESS

at the



New York, December 7, 1988

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Esteemed Mr. Chairman,
Esteemed Mr. Secretary-General,
Esteemed delegates,

We have come here to express our respect for the United Nations Organization, which is increasingly manifesting itself as a unique international centre serving the cause of peace and security.

We have come here to express our respect for the great merit of this organization, an organization with the capability of accumulating humankind's collective intellect and will.

Developments are showing with growing vividness that the world needs such an organization. This organization, for its part, needs the active participation of all its members and their support for its initiatives and actions. It needs their abilities and original contributions which enrich its work.

In my article "Realities and Guarantees for a Secure World" written slightly over a year ago, I made several observations concerning matters within the competence of the United Nations.

The time that has passed since then has given new

grounds for consideration. The world has truly reached a turning point in its development.

The Soviet Union's role in world affairs is well known. In view of the revolutionary restructuring that is taking place in our country—perestroika—which has a tremendous potential for promoting peace and international cooperation, we are particularly interested today in being understood correctly.

That is why we have come here to express our ideas, and we want this most authoritative world organization to be the first to be informed of our new and important decisions.

I

What will humanity be like as it enters the 21st century? Thoughts about this already very near future are engaging people's minds. While we look forward to the future with the anticipation of change for the better, we also view it with alarm.

Today, the world is a very different place from what it was at the beginning of this century, and even in the middle of it. And the world and all of its components keep changing.

The emergence of nuclear weapons was a tragic way of stressing the fundamental nature of these changes. Being the material symbol and the bearer of the ultimate military force, nuclear weapons at the same time laid bare the absolute limits to this force.

Humankind is faced with the problem of survival, of self-protection, in all its magnitude.

Profound social changes are taking place.

In the East and in the South, in the West and in the North, hundreds of millions of people, new nations and

states, new public movements and ideologies have advanced to the foreground of history.

The striving for independence, democracy and social justice manifests itself, in all its diversity and with all its contradictions, in broad and frequently turbulent popular movements. The idea of democratizing the entire world order has grown into a powerful social and political force.

At the same time, the revolution in science and technology has turned economic, food, energy, ecological, information and demographic problems, which only recently were of a national or regional character, into global problems.

The newest techniques of communications, mass information and transport have made the world more visible and more tangible to everyone. International communication is easier now than ever before.

Nowadays, it is virtually impossible for any society to be "closed". That is why we need a radical revision of the views on the totality of problems of international cooperation, which is the most essential component of universal security.

The world economy is becoming a single entity, outside of which no state can develop normally, regardless of its social system or economic level.

All this calls for creating an altogether new mechanism for the functioning of the world economy, a new structure of the international division of labour.

World economic growth, however, is revealing the contradictions of the traditional type of industrial development and its limitations. The expansion and deepening of industrialization is leading to an ecological catastrophe.

But there are many countries with insufficiently developed industry and some that are not yet indus-

trialized. Whether these countries will follow the old technological patterns in their economic development or be able to join the search for ecologically clean industries is one of the biggest problems.

Another problem is the growing gap between the industrialized nations and most of the developing countries, which is presenting an increasingly serious threat on a global scale.

All these factors make it necessary to look for a fundamentally new type of industrial progress that would be in accordance with the interests of all peoples and states.

In a word, the new realities are changing the entire international situation. But differences and contradictions are either becoming weaker or are changing, while new ones are emerging.

Some former disagreements and disputes are losing their importance, yielding to conflicts of a different nature.

Life is making us abandon traditional stereotypes and outdated views and free ourselves from illusions.

The very idea of the nature and criteria of progress is changing.

To assume that the problems tormenting humankind can be solved by the means and methods that were used or that seemed to be suitable in the past is naive.

There is no denying that humankind has accumulated a very rich experience of political, economic and social development under very diverse conditions. But this experience belongs to the practice and type of world that are either already gone or are receding into the past.

This is one of the signs of the crucial character of the current stage of history.

The greatest philosophers tried to understand the

laws of social development and find the answer to the main question—how to make human life happier, fairer and more secure. Two great revolutions—the French Revolution of 1789 and the Russian Revolution of 1917—exercised a powerful impact on the very nature of the historic process, having radically changed the course of world developments.

These two revolutions, each in its own way, gave a huge impulse to human progress. They also greatly contributed to forming the pattern of mentality that continues to prevail in the minds of people. This is the greatest intellectual asset.

But today a new world is emerging, and we must look for new ways of its future development. In doing so, we should by all means rely on our accumulated experience, but, at the same time, we must see the fundamental difference between what was and what is.

It is not only this that makes our tasks novel and difficult. We are entering an era in which progress will be based on the common interests of the whole of humankind.

The realization of this fact demands that the common values of humanity must be the determining priority in international politics.

The history of past centuries and millennia is one of wars being waged almost everywhere. Some of them were so desperate as to be nothing short of mutual annihilation.

They were the result of a clash of social and political interests, national enmity and ideological or religious incompatibility. All this has taken place.

And to this day many claim that the past that has yet to be overcome is an inexorable law.

But alongside the wars, animosity and dissociation of peoples and countries, an equally objective process

has been developing: the assertion of the world's interdependence and integrity.

Further global progress is now possible only through a quest for universal consensus in the movement towards a new world order.

We have reached a point where spontaneity and disorder may lead us into a blind alley. The international community has to learn to form and channel processes in such a way as to save civilization and to make the world a safer place for all of us and more conducive to normal life.

What I am referring to is the kind of cooperation that could be called "co-creativity" and "co-development".

The concept of development at another's expense is becoming obsolete. Today's realities make any genuine progress impossible if it disregards human and national rights and freedoms, or is detrimental to the environment.

If we are to solve global problems, countries and socio-political trends, whatever their ideological or other differences, must bring to their interaction a new scope and quality.

Crucial changes and revolutionary transformations are sure to take place in this or that country and social structure. This has always been the case, and always will be.

But our times have changed the way of things here as well. Transformations in countries can't achieve their national goals unless they take into account the achievements of the whole world and the potential of equal cooperation, that is, if these transformations merely remain parallel to each other.

In the present conditions outside interference in these domestic processes to adjust them to alien ways

would be destructive for the emergent peaceful arrangement.

In the past, differences often acted as barriers; today they can develop into factors of rapprochement and mutual enrichment.

Specific interests underlie all differences between social systems, ways of life, and value preferences. There's no getting away from this fact.

But then, there's also no getting away from the necessity to balance these interests on the international level. Their balance is a vital condition of survival and progress.

In thinking all this over, it becomes clear that we have to look for ways together to improve the international situation, to build a new world—that is, if we are going to take into consideration the lessons of the past, the realities of the present, and the objective logic of world development.

If this is really true, it would be worthwhile to reach an understanding on the basic and genuinely universal principles of this search, and the prerequisites for it.

It is evident, in particular, that force or the threat of force neither can nor should be instruments of foreign policy. This mainly refers to nuclear arsenals, but not to them alone. All of us, and first of all the strongest of us, have to practice self-restraint and renounce the use of force in the international arena.

This is the cornerstone of the ideal of a non-violent world proclaimed by the Soviet Union and India in their Delhi Declaration. We invite all to adopt this ideal.

It is clear even today that no country can achieve omnipotence, no matter how much it builds up its military might. Furthermore, emphasis on that might alone will in the final analysis undermine other aspects of that country's national security.

We also clearly see that the principle of **freedom of choice** is a must. Refusal to recognize this principle will have serious consequences for world peace.

To deny a nation the freedom of choice, regardless of the pretext or the verbal guise in which it is cloaked, is to upset the unstable balance that has been achieved at this point. Freedom of choice is a universal principle. It knows no exceptions.

We did not recognize the immutable nature of this principle simply out of good intentions. We arrived at it as we engaged in unbiased analyses of objective current processes.

Among their other features, the **variety of ways** of social development in different countries is coming to the fore. This is true of both the capitalist and socialist systems.

This is further borne out by the diversity of socio-political structures which has emerged in recent decades out of national-liberation movements.

This objective factor demands respect of others' views and positions, tolerance, a readiness to accept things different—not summarily reject them as bad or hostile, the ability to learn how to coexist in spite of our differences, in spite of the fact that we may disagree with each other on some points.

As the many-sided nature of the world asserts itself, it undermines high-handed attempts to teach one's democratic patterns to others—to say nothing of the fact that democracy, when exported, often quickly loses its values.

So what we need is unity through diversity. If we recognize this in politics and declare our adherence to the principle of freedom of choice, then we shall no longer think that some of us inhabit this world in

fulfilment of Providential will while others are here by mere chance.

It's high time to discard such a way of thinking and change policies accordingly. Then further prospects for bringing the world closer together will open up.

This new stage requires the freeing of international relations from ideology. Not that we give up our convictions, philosophy and traditions, or appeal to anyone else to give up theirs.

Nor do we intend to shut ourselves away with our values. Such isolation would mean to reject such a powerful source of development as exchanges of each other's original, independent achievements. This would mean a spiritual loss for us.

As such an exchange thrives, let us all demonstrate the benefits of our systems, way of life and values, not only in words and propaganda, but in real deeds.

This would be honest competition between ideologies. But it mustn't spread into the sphere of relations between states, for otherwise, we shall be unable to tackle such global tasks as:

- setting up extensive, equal and mutually beneficial cooperation between nations;

- using breakthroughs in science and technology wisely;

- restructuring international economic ties or protecting the environment;

- eradicating underdevelopment, hunger, disease, illiteracy and other scourges;

- and, last but not least, eliminating the nuclear threat and militarism.

Such are our reflections on the destinies of the world on the threshold of the 21st century.

We in no way aspire to be the bearer of the ultimate truth. But the profound analysis of realities past and

present brings us to the conclusion that, if the world's civilization, possibly the only one in the Universe, is to remain viable, it is precisely these steps that we must take in our joint quest for **the supremacy of the idea central to all mankind** over the multitude of centrifugal trends.

We often hear at home and from some of our Western partners that these views are overly idealistic, overestimating the maturity and potential of the thinking of the world public.

But I am convinced that we are fully realistic.

Forces have already emerged in the world that in some way prompt us **to enter an era of peace**. Nations and the public at large ardently wish to see improvements. They want to learn to cooperate.

This trend is sometimes remarkably strong. What's most important, such sentiments are being transformed into policy.

A change in philosophical approaches and political relations is a major prerequisite for giving, with reliance on the objective world processes, a powerful impetus to the efforts to establish new relations between states.

Similar conclusions are being made even by those politicians whose activities were once associated with the cold war, sometimes even with its most intense periods. They, of all people, find it especially difficult to leave behind the stereotypes and experience of that time.

And if even they are changing in this way, then more opportunities like that are likely to appear with the advent of new generations.

Simply put, the realization that there is a need for peace is spreading and becoming a prevalent trend. This is what has made possible the first real steps in improving the international situation and in starting the process of disarmament.

What practical conclusions follow from all this? It is

only natural and wise not to give up the gains that we have already made, and to advance everything positive that we have achieved in recent years through joint efforts.

I'm referring to the process of negotiations on the problems of nuclear armaments, conventional arms, and chemical weapons, and the search for political approaches to the solution of regional conflicts.

Of course, this applies first and foremost to political dialogue, I mean a more intensive and open dialogue, one that would be aimed at the essence of problems, not at confrontation, which implies an exchange of constructive considerations, rather than accusations. The negotiating process won't go forward without political dialogue.

From our point of view, rather optimistic prospects exist for the near and the more distant future.

Look at how our relations with the United States have changed. Mutual understanding has gradually begun to develop, and elements of trust have appeared, without which it is very difficult to advance in politics.

Such elements are even more pronounced in Europe. The Helsinki process is a great process. In my opinion, it is still valid. It should be preserved and deepened in all aspects—philosophical, political, and practical, but with due account of new circumstances.

Today's realities are such that the dialogue which is ensuring the normal and constructive development of the international process, requires the constant and active participation of all countries and regions: such major powers as India, China, Japan, and Brazil, and others—large, medium, and small.

I stand for making political dialogue more dynamic and meaningful, for consolidating the political prerequisites necessary for improving the international at-

mosphere. This would also facilitate the practical solution of many problems. This is a difficult task, but it is this path that we must follow.

Everyone should take part in the drive towards greater world unity.

This is especially important now, for we are witnessing a crucial moment when the question of ways to ensure the solidarity of the world, stability, and the dynamic character of international relations is coming to the fore.

Meanwhile, talking with foreign statesmen and politicians, and I've had more than 200 such conversations with them, I sometimes felt they were dissatisfied with the fact that at this crucial stage they occasionally found themselves alienated, as it were, from the main issues of world politics for various reasons. It is only natural and correct that nobody wants to reconcile himself to this.

If we are all parts, however different, of one and the same civilization, if we are aware of the interdependence of the modern world, this understanding should increasingly manifest itself both in politics and in practical efforts to harmonize international relations. Perhaps, the term "perestroika" does not fit in very well in this case, but I do support **new international relations**.

I'm sure that the time and realities of today's world require a stake to be made on rendering the dialogue and negotiating process **international**.

This is **the main, general conclusion** at which we have arrived, studying global processes that have been gaining momentum in recent time, and taking part in world politics.

II

The question of the new role of the United Nations suggests itself in this specific historical situation.

It seems to us that states should reconsider their attitude towards such a unique instrument as the United Nations, without which world politics is inconceivable.

The recent invigoration of the United Nations' peacemaking role has again demonstrated its ability to help its members to resolve the formidable challenges of the time and follow the road of making relations more humane.

It is regrettable that immediately after its foundation the United Nations was subjected to the onslaught of the Cold War. For many years it was a propaganda battlefield and a scene of political confrontation.

Let historians argue whose share of the blame was bigger and whose was smaller. As for politicians, they should now study the lessons of this chapter in the history of the United Nations, which was diametrically opposed to the very essence and mission of the United Nations.

One of the most bitter and important lessons is the long list of missed opportunities, and, as a consequence, the decline in UN prestige at that time, and the failure of its numerous attempts to act.

It is highly significant that the revival of the United Nations' role is linked with the improvement in the international climate.

The United Nations embodies, as it were, the interests of different states. It is the only organization which can channel their efforts—bilateral, regional, and comprehensive—in one and the same direction.

Fresh opportunities are opening before it in all the spheres within its competence: military, political, economic, scientific and technical, ecological and humanitarian.

Take, for example, **the problem of development**. This is a truly universal problem. The conditions under

which tens of millions of people exist in some Third World regions are simply becoming a danger for humanity as a whole.

No closed formations, not even the regional communities of states, however important they might be, can untie the major knots which have appeared on the main lines of world economic ties: North-South, East-West, South-South, South-East, and East-East.

What is needed here is a united effort, the consideration of the interests of all groups of countries. This can only be ensured by such an organization as the United Nations.

Foreign debt is the most acute problem.

Let us not forget that in the colonial epoch the developing world ensured the prosperity of no small part of the world community at the price of incalculable losses and sacrifice. The time has come to compensate for the privations which accompanied its historic and tragic contribution to the world's material progress.

We are convinced that the way out again lies in **internationalizing the approach.**

Making a realistic assessment of the situation, we have to admit that the accumulated debt cannot be either repaid or recovered on the initial terms.

The Soviet Union is prepared to establish a long-term (up to one hundred years) moratorium on the repayment of this debt by the least developed countries, and to write it off completely in a large number of cases.

As for **other developing countries**, we invite you to consider the following propositions:

-- to limit payments on their official debts depending on the economic development figures for each particular country, or to reschedule a considerable share of such payments until much later;

— to support the appeal by the UN Conference on

Trade and Development to cut debts to commercial banks;

— to provide governmental support for market debt relief mechanisms for the Third World, including the establishment of an international debt-takeover agency to buy loans at a discount.

The Soviet Union is in favour of the practical discussion of methods of settling the debt crisis at multilateral forums, including UN-sponsored consultations between the heads of the governments of debtor countries and their creditors.

International economic security is inconceivable in isolation from not only disarmament but also from the **awareness of the global threat to the environment**. The environmental situation in a number of regions is simply appalling.

A UN-sponsored conference on the environment is planned for 1992. We welcome this decision and are hopeful that the forum will produce results equal to the scope of the problem.

There is no time to waste, and people in various countries are doing a tremendous amount. Here I would like once again to give special emphasis to the opportunities opened up for restoring the environment in the process of disarmament—first of all, nuclear.

Let us also think about establishing an emergency environmental aid centre within the UN. Its function would be to promptly dispatch international groups of experts to areas that have experienced a sharp deterioration in the environmental situation.

The Soviet Union is also prepared to cooperate in the establishment of an international space laboratory or manned orbiting station that would deal exclusively with monitoring the state of the environment.

As regards **space exploration** in general, the out-

lines of future industry in space are becoming increasingly clear.

The Soviet position on this point is known only too well: any activities in space must exclude deployment of any weapons there. For that, too, we need a legal base which, in fact, is already established by the 1967 Treaty, and by other agreements.

Even so, there is a pressing need to develop a comprehensive regime for peaceful activity in space. As for control over the observance of that regime, that would be a prerogative of a World Space Organization.

We have proposed the establishment of such an organization on many occasions. In fact, we are prepared to include in its network our radar station at Krasnoyarsk. The decision to hand this station over to the USSR Academy of Sciences has already been made.

Soviet scientists are prepared to meet with their foreign colleagues and discuss ways of converting it into an international centre of peaceful cooperation by dismantling and remodelling some of its systems and installations and also adding equipment essential for such a centre. This system could operate under the auspices of the UN.

The whole world welcomes the efforts of the United Nations and of its Secretary-General, Pérez de Cuéllar, and his envoys in settling **regional problems**.

Let me be somewhat more specific on this subject.

To paraphrase the words of an English poet, which Hemingway used for the epigraph to one of his famous novels, I will put it as follows: the bell of each regional conflict tolls for all of us.

This is especially true because these conflicts are taking place in the Third World, which already has troubles and problems of a scale that cannot but worry us all.

The year 1988 has also brought us a ray of hope in this common concern. It has touched upon nearly all regional conflicts, and there have been signs of improvement in some places. We welcome them and have done all in our power to promote them.

The only point to which I would like to give special mention is Afghanistan.

The Geneva accords, whose essential and practical significance has been highly appreciated all over the world, offered an opportunity for completing the settlement even before the end of this year. That did not happen.

This regrettable fact reminds us once again of the political, juridical and moral importance of the ancient Roman maxim: *Pacta sunt servanda!*—agreements must be honoured!

I do not want to use this opportunity to rebuke anyone.

We think, however, that it would be within the UN jurisdiction to combine the November resolution of the General Assembly with some practical measures.

To quote the resolution, “for the earliest comprehensive settlement by the Afghans themselves of the question of a government on a broad basis”, the following measures should be taken:

— as of January 1, 1989, a ceasefire and the cessation of all offensive operations and rocket attacks should come into effect, with all the territories occupied by the opposing Afghan groups remaining under their control for the duration of the talks;

— accordingly, all arms deliveries to warring sides should be stopped as of the same date;

— for the time of the establishment of a government on a broad basis, as envisaged by the resolution of the General Assembly, UN peace-keeping forces should be

sent to Kabul and other strategic centres in Afghanistan;

— we also request the UN Secretary-General to contribute to the earliest implementation of the idea of holding an international conference on the neutrality and demilitarization of Afghanistan.

We will continue to actively assist in healing the wounds of war, and are also prepared to cooperate in this work both with the UN and on a bilateral basis.

We support the proposal for the establishment of a UN-sponsored international volunteer peace corps to assist in the revitalization of Afghanistan.

In connection with the problem of the settlement of regional conflicts, I cannot help but express my view on a serious incident which has happened just recently and which has a direct bearing on this session.

A representative of an organization which enjoys the status of a permanent observer in the UN has been banned by US authorities from addressing the General Assembly. I am speaking of Yasser Arafat.

Moreover, this has happened at a time when the Palestine Liberation Organization has made an important and constructive move to facilitate the search for a solution to the Middle East problem with the help of the UN Security Council.

This has happened at a time when a positive tendency towards political settlement of other regional conflicts has emerged, in some instances with the help of the USSR and the USA.

We deeply regret what has occurred and express our solidarity with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Gentlemen, the concept of comprehensive international security is based on the principles of the UN Charter and the assumption that international law is binding on all states.

While championing demilitarization of international relations, we would like political and legal methods to reign supreme in all attempts to solve the arising problems.

Our ideal is a world community of states with political systems and foreign policies based on law.

This could be achieved with the help of an accord within the framework of the UN on a uniform understanding of the principles and norms of international law; their codification with new conditions taken into consideration; and the elaboration of legislation for new areas of cooperation.

In the nuclear era, the effectiveness of international law must be based on norms reflecting a balance of interests of states, rather than on coercion.

As the awareness of our common fate grows, every state would be genuinely interested in confining itself within the limits of international law.

Making international relations more democratic not only means that the greatest possible number of members of the international community must be involved in the effort to solve major problems, it also means that international relations must be humanized.

International ties will fully reflect the real interests of the peoples and reliably serve the cause of their overall security only when man and his concerns, rights and freedoms are in the centre of things.

In this context, let my country join the chorus of voices expressing their great esteem for the significance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted forty years ago, on December 10, 1948.

This document is still valid today. It spells out the universal nature of the goals and tasks pursued by the United Nations.

The best way for states to mark the anniversary of

the Declaration would be to create better conditions in their countries for the observance and protection of the rights of their citizens.

Before I inform you about what we have done in this area recently, I would like to make the following comments:

Our country is experiencing truly revolutionary enthusiasm. The process of perestroika is gaining momentum. We started by elaborating the philosophy of perestroika. We had to evaluate the nature and scale of the problems, to learn our lessons from the past and translate our findings into political conclusions and programmes. This has been done.

Theoretical efforts, the reconsideration of what is happening, the revision, enrichment and correction of political positions are yet to be completed. They are still underway.

But it was crucial to begin with a general philosophy which, as the experience of the past few years has shown, is correct in principle and has no alternative.

It required genuine democratization to involve society in the drive to accomplish the plans of perestroika. Under the banner of democratization, perestroika has been projected into the political, economic, cultural and ideological fields.

We have launched a radical economic reform. We have gained some experience and will transfer the entire economy to new forms and methods of work from the new year. As part of this effort, we will reorganize production relations and realize the vast potential inherent in socialist ownership.

In pursuing such bold revolutionary transformations, we knew that mistakes would be made and that there would be resistance to the new, engendering new problems, so we anticipated delays in some areas.

But our guarantee that the overall process of perestroika will proceed steadily ahead and gain momentum is the profound democratic reform of the entire system of government and administration.

With the recent introduction of constitutional amendments by the USSR Supreme Soviet and the adoption of a new electoral law, we have completed the first stage of the political reform.

Without pausing, we have entered the second stage, whereby the paramount tasks will be to practise co-ordination between central authorities and republics, to settle ethnic relations in line with the principles of Leninist internationalism, as bequeathed to us by the Great Revolution, and at the same time to reform the administration of local Soviets.

We have a great deal of work ahead of us, and must simultaneously cope with an array of formidable issues.

But we are looking into the future with confidence. We have the theory, the political framework and the driving force of perestroika—the Party, which is also reforming itself in accordance with the new tasks and profound transformations in the whole of society.

And, most important of all—perestroika is supported by every nation and every generation of citizens in our great country.

We have plunged ourselves into constructing a socialist state based on the rule of law. There is a whole series of new laws which have been elaborated or are nearing completion.

Many will enter into force in 1989, and we believe they will comply fully with the highest standards from the point of view of ensuring human rights.

Soviet democracy will then develop a sound legal basis. I am referring to the enactment of laws on

freedom of conscience, on glasnost, on public amalgamations and organizations and many others.

People are no longer kept in prison for their political and religious views.

The draft new laws propose additional guarantees to rule out any form of persecution on these grounds.

Of course, this does not apply to criminal offenders or those guilty of crimes against the state (spying, subversion, terrorism, etc.), no matter what their political views or their world outlook.

The draft amendments to the Criminal Code have been completed and are on the waiting list. The articles to be revised include those concerning capital punishment.

The problem of emigration and immigration, including the question of emigration for the re-unification of families, is being resolved in a humane way.

Permission to leave, as you all know, is denied to citizens who know state secrets. Strictly justifiable time limits are being introduced in relation to the knowledge of classified information.

Anyone employed at an office or enterprise with access to classified information will be duly informed about this rule. In case of any dispute one can appeal in conformity with the law.

This will help to remove the problem of the so-called "refuseniks" from the agenda.

We intend to expand the Soviet Union's participation in the controlling mechanisms of human rights under the aegis of the UN, and within the framework of the European process. We think that the jurisdiction of the International Court in the Hague with regard to the interpretation and application of agreements on human rights must be binding on all states.

We also see an end to the jamming of broadcasts by

all foreign radio stations that transmit programmes to the Soviet Union, within the context of the Helsinki process.

On the whole our credo is as follows: political issues shall be resolved only by political means, and human problems only in a humane way.

III

And now for the most important thing of all, without which no other issue of the forthcoming age can be solved, that is, **disarmament**.

International developments and affairs have been distorted by the arms race and the militarization of thought.

As you will no doubt be aware, on January 15, 1986 the Soviet Union advanced a programme to construct a world free from nuclear weapons. Efforts to translate this programme into negotiations already have produced some tangible results.

Tomorrow will be the first anniversary of the signing of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles. And I am pleased to say today that the implementation of the Treaty—the destruction of missiles—is proceeding normally, in an atmosphere of trust and constructive work.

A large breach has been made in the wall of suspicion and hostility, which once seemed to be impenetrable. And we are witnessing a new historic reality: **the principle of excessive arms stockpiling is giving way to the principle of reasonable sufficiency for defence.**

We are witnessing the first efforts to build a new model of security through the reduction of armaments on the basis of compromise, not through their build-up, as was almost always the case in the past.

And the Soviet leadership has decided once again to demonstrate its willingness to encourage this healthy process not only in words but in **actions**.

Today I am able to inform you of the fact that the Soviet Union has decided to reduce its armed forces.

Over the next two years their strength will be reduced by 500,000 men, and substantial cuts will be made in conventional armaments. These cuts will be made **unilaterally**, regardless of the talks on the mandate of the Vienna meeting.

By agreement with our Warsaw Treaty allies, we have decided to withdraw six tank divisions from the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia and Hungary by 1991, and to disband them.

In addition, assault-landing formations and units and some others, including assault-crossing support units with their armaments and combat equipment, will be withdrawn from the Soviet forces stationed in these countries.

The Soviet forces stationed in these countries will be reduced by 50,000 men and 5,000 tanks.

The Soviet divisions which still remain on the territory of our allies will be reorganized. Their structure will be changed: a large number of tanks will be withdrawn, and they will become strictly defensive.

At the same time we shall cut troops and armaments in the European part of the USSR.

The total reductions of Soviet armed forces in the European regions of the USSR and on the territory of our European allies will amount to 10,000 tanks, 8,500 artillery systems and 800 combat aircraft.

During the next two years we shall also make considerable reductions in the armed forces grouping in the Asian part of our country. By agreement with the

Mongolian government, a large number of the Soviet troops temporarily stationed there will return home.

In taking these important decisions the Soviet leadership is expressing the will of the Soviet people, who are engaged in the radical overhaul of their entire socialist society.

We shall maintain the country's defence capability at a level of reasonable and dependable sufficiency, so that no one is tempted to encroach upon the security of the USSR or its allies.

By this action and by all our efforts to demilitarize international relations, we want to draw the attention of the international community to yet another urgent matter, the problem of converting **the armaments economy into a disarmament economy**.

Is the conversion of arms production possible? I have already spoken on this score. We believe it is.

The Soviet Union, for its part, is prepared:

- to draft and present its own internal conversion plan as part of its economic reform effort;
- to prepare plans for the conversion of two or three defence plants as an experiment during 1989;
- to make public its experience in re-employing defence personnel and using defence facilities and equipment in civilian production.

We consider it desirable for all countries, especially the great military powers, to submit their national conversion plans to the United Nations.

It will also be beneficial if a team of scientists is formed and entrusted with the task of analyzing the problem of conversion in depth, both in general and with regard to individual countries and regions, and reporting its findings to the UN Secretary-General.

Later, this question should be discussed at a session of the General Assembly.

IV

Lastly, since I am on American soil, and for other understandable reasons, I cannot help speaking about our relations with this great nation. I was able to fully appreciate its hospitality during my memorable visit to Washington exactly one year ago.

The relations between the Soviet Union and the United States stretch back over five and a half decades. As the world has changed, so have the character, role and place of these relations in world politics.

For too long these relations were characterized by confrontation and sometimes hostility, be it open or concealed.

But in recent years people all over the world have sighed with relief as the essence and atmosphere of relations between Moscow and Washington have taken a turn for the better.

I am not underestimating the seriousness of our differences or the complexity of the problems yet to be resolved. However, we have learned our first lessons in mutual understanding and in searching for solutions that meet both our own and general interests.

The USSR and the United States have built up immense nuclear-missile arsenals. But they have also managed to clearly acknowledge their responsibility and become the first to conclude an agreement on the reduction and physical elimination of some of those weapons, which have threatened their own countries and all the other nations of the world.

Our two countries have the greatest and most sophisticated military secrets. But it is precisely they who have laid the basis for and are developing a system of mutual verification of the destruction of armaments, their limitation and a ban on their production.

It is precisely they who are accumulating experience for future bilateral and multilateral agreements.

We cherish this experience, and we appreciate and value the contribution made by President Ronald Reagan and the members of his administration, especially Mr. George Shultz.

All this is capital which we have invested in a joint venture of historic significance. It must not be wasted or left idle.

The new US administration, to be led by President-elect George Bush, will find in us a partner prepared, without procrastination or backsliding, to continue the dialogue in the spirit of realism, openness and goodwill, and determined to achieve practical results on the agenda which now embraces key issues of Soviet-American relations and international politics.

I am referring, above all, to the consistent movement towards a treaty on a 50 per cent reduction in strategic offensive arms, while retaining the ABM Treaty;

the work on drafting a convention for the elimination of chemical weapons (we believe that 1989 may become a decisive year in this respect);

the negotiations on the reduction of conventional arms and armed forces in Europe.

I am also referring to economic, ecological and humanitarian problems in the broadest context.

It would be wrong to ascribe all the positive changes in the international situation to the USSR and the United States alone.

The Soviet Union highly values the great and original contribution made to the improvement of the international situation by the socialist countries.

In the course of negotiations, we constantly feel the presence of other great states, both nuclear and non-nuclear.

Many countries, including medium-sized and small ones, and, of course, the Non-Aligned Movement and the inter-continental Group of Six play an invaluable, constructive role.

We in Moscow are pleased that more and more government, political, party and public leaders, and—I would like to particularly emphasize this—scientists, cultural figures, representatives of mass movements and various Churches, activists of what is called people's diplomacy, are prepared to shoulder the burden of general responsibility.

In this context, I think the idea of convening an Assembly of Public Organizations on a regular basis under the aegis of the United Nations also deserves consideration.

We have no intention of over-simplifying the situation in the world.

True, the drive for disarmament has received a strong impetus and is gaining momentum, but it has not become irreversible.

True, there is a strong desire to end confrontation in favour of dialogue and cooperation, but this trend has not become a permanent feature in the practice of international relations.

True, the movement towards a non-violent world free from nuclear weapons can radically change the political and moral aspect of our planet, but we have only made the very first steps, and even these steps have been met with distrust and resistance in some influential circles.

The heritage and inertia of the past are still at work, and deep contradictions and the root causes of many conflicts have not yet disappeared.

The fundamental fact remains that the shaping of a period of peace will be accompanied by the existence

and rivalry of the different social, economic and political systems.

However, the aim of our efforts in the international arena, and one of the key provisions of our concept of new thinking, is that we must transform this rivalry into sensible competition on the basis of respect for freedom of choice and balance of interests.

In this case, it will even be useful and productive from the point of view of general world development.

Otherwise, if the arms race continues to form its main element, it will be suicidal.

More and more people throughout the world, from ordinary people to leaders, are coming to realize this.

Esteemed Mr. Chairman, esteemed delegates,

I am concluding my first address at the United Nations with the same feeling as I began it—a feeling of responsibility to my own people and to the international community.

We have met at the end of a very significant year for the United Nations, and at the threshold of the new year, from which we all expect so much.

And I hope our joint efforts to end the epoch of wars, confrontation and regional conflicts, to end aggression against Nature, the terror of hunger and poverty and political terrorism will justify our aspirations.

This is our common goal and we shall be able to achieve it only by working together.

Thank you.

Михаил Сергеевич Горбачев
ВЫСТУПЛЕНИЕ В ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ
ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫХ НАЦИИ

Нью-Йорк, 7 декабря 1988 года

на английском языке

Цена 10 к.

