

## Mikhail Gorbachev's address to Moscow Forum

*Here follows the full text of the address made by Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, to participants in the International Forum for a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World, for the Survival of Humanity:*

Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Comrades,

The destinies of the world and the future of humanity have concerned the best minds in various lands ever since man first thought of the morrow.

Until relatively recently these and related reflections have been seen as an imaginative exercise, as the other-worldly pursuits of philosophers, scholars and theologians. In the past decades, however, these problems have moved on to a highly practical plane. The reasons are obvious.

The development and subsequent stockpiling of nuclear weapons and of their delivery vehicles beyond all reasonable bounds have made man technically capable of terminating his own existence. The simultaneous accumulation of explosive social material in the world, and attempts to continue tackling forcefully, with stone-age methods the problems of a cardinaly altered world make catastrophe highly likely in political terms as well. The militarisation of mentality and of the way of life weakens and even removes altogether any moral inhibitions with regard to nuclear suicide.

We have no right to forget that the first step, which is always the most risky, has already been made. Nuclear weapons have been used against human beings, and used twice. There are dozens — I repeat dozens — of recorded and acknowledged moments when the possibility of using such weapons against other countries was seriously considered. I am not saying this by way of criticism or condemnation, though they are more than merited. I am saying this to stress once again how close mankind has come to the point-of-no-return.

The First World War shocked its contemporaries for its unprecedented scale of destruction and suffering, for the brutality and technical impersonality of the success of annihilation. But appalling as the wounds it inflicted were, the Second World War surpassed its "records" many times over.

One strategic submarine today carries a destructive punch equivalent to several Second World Wars. There are scores of such submarines and their nuclear systems are far from being the

only ones. The imagination is powerless to envision the hell and the negation of the idea of man if any part, however small, of the present nuclear arsenal is used.

The Second World War (like the first) was followed by attempts to arrange the world in such a way as to preclude repetition of the wholesale slaughter of peoples. Although these attempts have not quite lived up to expectations, they have nevertheless left some trace. There is the United Nations Organisation. There are regional and other structures for state-to-state and public contacts, structures that did not exist before. In brief, the political search for ways of breaking the world community out of the vicious "logic" that resulted in the world wars, continues.

A nuclear war would leave no problems, and there would be no one left to sit at the negotiation table, let alone the negotiating tree-stump or stone.

There would be no second Noah's Ark for a nuclear deluge. Everyone seems to understand this. So it is time to realise that we can no longer expect things to take care of themselves. There are still quite a few people in the world who think precisely in this way. International contacts and the policy of governments and states have to be brought without delay into line with the realities of the nuclear age.

The question stands like this: either political mentality is geared to the requirements of the times, or civilisation and life itself on Earth may perish.

In all human affairs, and especially in international politics, we should not for a moment forget the currently dominant contradiction between war and peace, between the existence and non-existence for humanity, and we must work to resolve it in good time in favour of peace.

This requires us to seek out, foster and share with each other all the best that history has

produced, to look for new creative approaches to chronic problems.

The very survival and not just progress of the human race depend on whether or not we find the strength and courage to overcome the threats hidden in the modern world.

We believe that there are grounds for expecting so. A notable feature of recent decades has been that for the first time in its history mankind as a whole, and not only individual representatives, has begun to feel that it is one entity, to see global relationships between man, society and nature, and to assess the consequences of material activities.

This feeling did not come alone, it has brought with it a struggle to remove the nuclear threat. And it cannot be denied that it has already become a great moral and political school in which the masses of the people and whole nations are learning the difficult but necessary art of living in peace with each other, of striking a balance between general and particular interests, of looking at the present and future boldly, square on, of comprehending them and, in doing so, drawing conclusions for action. Your forum is evidence of this.

Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Comrades,

Before describing the substance of all these problems in detail, I wish, on behalf of the people and the Government of the Soviet Union, to extend cordial greetings to you all — participants in the Moscow Forum — politicians and journalists, businessmen and scholars, doctors and people of culture and the arts, writers and representatives of various churches.

We value and appreciate that such a forum is being held and that such a great number of famous and influential people have gathered for it from all over the world. We understand that every one of you has duties and commitments. Nevertheless, you postponed them and travelled

## Mikhail Gorbachev at conference of CMEA secretaries

ON February 11 Mikhail Gorbachev met the participants in a conference of secretaries of the central committees of the Communist and Workers' Parties in the CMEA countries responsible for agro-industrial issues.

During the conversation much attention was given to issues of invigorating co-operation within the socialist community in the sphere of economy, science and technology in the spirit of the working meetings of heads of the fraternal parties in Moscow.

It was noted that good results can be obtained through mutually beneficial fruitful co-operation between socialist countries in the sphere of the agro-industrial complex and the utilisation of modern equipment and technology.

The stable and dynamic development of the

agro-industrial sphere is a major political task facing the socialist countries. Its solution, it was noted during the conversation, largely determines not only success in intensifying the entire national economies but also progress in the social sphere and the consolidation of the positions of socialism in the international arena.

The fraternal parties of the socialist countries are seeking to exchange experience in developing and implementing agro-industrial policy and in learning from one another the most effective and advanced forms and methods of organising agricultural production.

The need was stressed for speeding up the implementation of the Comprehensive Programme for Scientific and Technological Progress of the CMEA countries to the Year 2000, including the part related to issues of modernising the agro-industrial complex and restructuring the integration mechanism. □

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the thousands of kilometres here to voice your concerns, to share your thoughts with people worried by the same problems.

This alone is very significant, for the forum includes representatives of various population strata, people from all continents, from dozens of states.

The forum is a true embodiment of world public opinion.

The ideas of the forum, the cares and sentiments that have brought you here are near and dear to the Soviet people. It is in this spirit that I once again address words of greeting and gratitude to you for the work you have done these past days. And I think that the voice of this forum, of each of you, will be heeded.

We are encouraged by the fact that for all the diversity of opinions, views, positions and evaluations, the salient feature of the forum has been a common wish to pool efforts against the nuclear danger, and in tackling other global issues before mankind.

It is very important that the ideas and spirit of the forum should reach the broad public and political circles and, more important still, should be reflected in the work of those at the helm of states. The Soviet Government will give due attention to what has been stated at the forum. This must be so, because these ideas concern the most vital and most essential thing — how to save a future for mankind.

I have a few things to say on the matters discussed at the forum and I wish to present the point of view of our government. But before doing that, I'd like to draw your attention to the following.

You have arrived in the Soviet Union at a time when essentially revolutionary changes are under way here. They are of immense significance for our society, for socialism as a whole, and for the entire world. It is only by understanding their content, meaning and aims that one can form a correct opinion about our international policy. Before my people, before you and before the whole world, I state with full responsibility that our international policy is more than ever determined by domestic policy, by our interest in concentrating on constructive endeavours to improve our country. This is why we need lasting peace, predictability and constructiveness in international relations.

It is often said — we still hear it — that there is some threat stemming from the USSR. A "Soviet threat" to peace and freedom.

I must say that the reorganisation which we have launched on such a scale and which is irreversible shows to everyone: this is where we want to direct our resources, this is where our thoughts are going, these are our actual programmes and intentions, on this we intend to spend the intellectual energy of our society.

Our main idea is to bring out the potential of socialism through activating all the people's strength. To do so we need full and free functioning of all public and state agencies, of all production collectives and creative unions, new forms of civic activity and restoration of those which were unfairly forgotten. In brief, we want a broad democratisation of all society. Further democratisation is also the main guarantee of the irreversible nature of the ongoing processes. We want more socialism and hence more democracy.

This is how we are continuing the cause of our great revolution. And our people have welcomed this enthusiastically.

To preclude any idle talk and speculation (we hear a lot of it from the West), I wish to emphasise that we are going about our reforms in accordance with our own socialist choice, on the basis of our notions about social values, and are guided by criteria of the Soviet way of life. We measure our successes and our mistakes solely by socialist yardsticks.

But we want to be understood and we hope that the world community will at last

acknowledge that our desire to make our country better will hurt no one, with the world only gaining from this.

Reorganisation is an invitation to any social system to compete with socialism peacefully. And we will be able to prove in practice that such competition benefits universal progress and world peace. But for such competition to take place and unfold in civilised forms worthy of 21st-century humanity, we must have a new outlook and overcome the mentality, stereotypes and dogmas inherited from a past gone never to return.

It took time for our society and the Soviet leadership to develop an interest in the new mode of thinking. We pondered a good deal. We criticised ourselves and others and asked ourselves difficult and challenging questions before we saw things as they are and became convinced that new approaches and methods are required for resolving international problems in today's complex and contradictory world, a world at a crossroads.

We came to conclusions that made us review something which once seemed axiomatic, since after Hiroshima and Nagasaki world war ceased to be a continuation of politics by other means. Nuclear war would incinerate the architects of such a policy, too.

We made ourselves face the fact that the stockpiling and sophistication of nuclear armaments mean the human race has lost its immortality. It can be regained only by destroying nuclear weapons.

We rejected any right for leaders of a country, be it the USSR, the US or any other, to pass a death sentence on mankind. We are not judges and the billions of people are not criminals to be punished. So the nuclear guillotine must be broken. The nuclear powers must overstep their nuclear shadow and enter a nuclear-free world, thus ending the alienation of politics from the general human norms of ethics.

A nuclear tornado will sweep away socialists and capitalists, the just and sinners alike. Is this situation moral? We communists do not think it is.

It may be said that we have come the hard way to the new outlook which is called upon to bridge the gap between political practice and universal moral and ethical standards.

Last year at the Party Congress, the highest forum of Soviet society, we set forth our vision of the world, our philosophical concept of its present and future. But we did not confine ourselves to proclaiming our theoretical doctrine. On its basis we formulated a definite political platform for an all-embracing system of international security. It is precisely a system, and it rests on the principle that one's own security cannot be built at the expense of others. It is a system that organically blends all the main spheres of security — military, political, economic and humanitarian.

In the military and political domain we put forward a programme to abolish nuclear weapons by the year 2000. It was announced on behalf of the Soviet people thirteen months ago, on January 15, 1986. And we are convinced that this date will go down in the history of struggle to save civilisation from death.

Prior to that we moved that all nuclear explosions be halted, and repeatedly extended our unilateral moratorium. We conceived the idea of the Reykjavik Summit and took three initiatives which, had the other side responded, would have signified the end of the arms race and a radical turn towards disarmament and elimination of the nuclear danger. Along with our allies, we undertook bold and large-scale steps concerning confidence-building measures and reduction of conventional arms and armed forces in Europe. We expressed readiness to have chemical weapons totally abolished.

In Vladivostok we invited Asian and Pacific

countries to search jointly for security for each and all in that huge and rising region of the world, for mutually advantageous and equal co-operation. We signed the Delhi Declaration, in which our philosophical and political approach to the construction of a nuclear-weapon-free and non-violent world merge with the approach of the great India and the billions of people represented by the Non-Aligned Movement.

As firm advocates of a new world economic order, we formulated and submitted for consideration by everyone a concept of international economic security.

Lastly, our new approach to the humanitarian problems from the "third Helsinki basket" is there for all to see, and I must disappoint those who think that this has been the result of pressure on us from the West, that we want to gain somebody's fancy in pursuit of some ulterior motives. No, we do not. This too is a result of the new way of thinking.

Thus, in every direction we seek to translate our philosophical vision of the world into practical politics. Naturally enough, it takes confidence for a new edifice of international security to be erected and cemented. We understand: the road to it is not simple, and it's not only we who are to cover it, although we, if you recall our history, have more cause for mistrust.

I will not delve into that. Let me just state that along with a deficit of new attitudes everyone feels a shortfall of confidence. I am not going to look into the reasons for this situation on a wider plane, although a lot might be said. We must now look forward, and not be captives of the past.

Confidence needs to be built up through experience in co-operation, through knowing each other better, through solving common problems. It is wrong in principle to say that first comes confidence and then all the rest: disarmament, co-operation and joint projects. Confidence, its creation, consolidation and development comes from common endeavour. This is the rational way.

And I repeat: everyone must begin with himself. It is not the pose of a self-appointed supreme judge of the whole world but respect for others and an unbiased and self-critical view toward one's own society that international relations need so badly now.

One of the chief results of the reconstructive drive in the Soviet Union is a general and universal confidence boost for our society. This bolsters our conviction that it is possible to establish trust in the sphere of international relations, too. The new mode of thinking is still labouring to break through in world politics. Trust is making ground very slowly. And I think this is why more and more people are realising that the fate of the major cause of our time should not be left to politicians alone. This cause concerns not only politicians. And we are witnessing the emergence and rise of a worldwide mass movement which embraces scientists, intellectuals of different professions, clergymen, women, young people, children (more and more), and even former military men and generals, who know full well what modern weapons are. And this is the result of people becoming more and more aware of what a very dangerous point the world has come to.

I believe that your forum is a major contribution to the mass movement for a nuclear-free world and for mankind's survival. I welcome the contribution made by the Moscow Forum.

I would like to say a few words here about the Reykjavik meeting. It was not a failure. It was a breakthrough. That was not just another round of negotiations but a moment of truth when a momentous opportunity was glimpsed to embark upon the path leading to a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The Reykjavik meeting has made a great impression everywhere in the world because we approached the issue of reducing nuclear arsenals

in an entirely new conceptual key, as a political and psychological problem rather than just military and technical. And we almost found a solution. But what are we to do with that "almost" which stopped us from reaching the finish in Reykjavik?

I shall not discuss here why that happened. I hope you know our view. What I want to say is that when, at a certain moment, both sides agreed at Reykjavik to make deep cuts in their nuclear arsenals and then eliminate them entirely, they virtually recognised that nuclear weapons can no longer effectively guarantee security.

What happened in Reykjavik irreversibly changed the nature and essence of the debate about a future world. This is an important political judgement. However, some people were scared by the new opportunities and they are now pulling back hard. However, hard though the past may tug, there is no returning to it. I am sure mankind can and will quite soon throw off the chains of nuclear weapons. But this will require a fight, a hard struggle.

The new political outlook sets out to raise civilisation to a qualitatively new level. This alone serves to show that it is no one-off adjustment of position but a methodology for international affairs.

There is probably no one in this hall or elsewhere who considers nuclear weapons innocuous. However, quite a few people sincerely believe them an evil necessary to prevent a greater evil, war. This viewpoint underlies the doctrine of nuclear deterrence.

Let me say the following.

First, even if we stick to this doctrine, we would have to admit that the "nuclear safeguard" is not 100 per cent effective and not termless. It may any time become a death sentence to mankind. The bigger the nuclear arsenals, the less chance they will be kept "obedient". Proliferation, increasingly sophisticated nuclear weapon systems, a greater transportation scale and the constant risk of technical error, human failure or malice are all chance factors on which the survival of mankind depends.

Second, if we look at deterrence from a different angle, we see that it is, in fact, a policy based on intimidation. Each model of behaviour has its inner logic. When threat is a political means, the natural wish is that each such threat should be taken seriously. For that one has to always back up threats by definite action. In this case, that means military force. The only conclusion one can draw is that the policy of deterrence, considered in a historical context, does not reduce the risk of military conflict. In fact, it further increases that risk. Nevertheless, even after Reykjavik, some leaders continue to cling to such a doctrine.

And the most adamant supporters of that doctrine are those who are inclined to teach us morality. But what is their own moral face? They are convinced and make no secret of the fact that threats, force and the use of force are the only language they know in dealing with others. How would you react if you met such a person in the street? How can educated leaders consider behaviour, generally considered unacceptable in relations between people, normal for relations between states?

Third, when disarmament is discussed a common thesis is that man is violent by nature and that he has a "war" instinct and that this instinct is indestructible.

Is war the perpetual concomitant of human existence then? If we accept this view, we shall have to reconcile ourselves with continuous development of ever more sophisticated weapons of mass destruction.

Such thinking is unacceptable. It is reminiscent of times when ever more sophisticated weapons were invented and used to conquer other peoples and enslave and pillage them. That past is no

model for the future. Man living on the threshold of the twenty-first century knows a great deal and can do a great deal. That is why he must realise the need to demilitarise the world. We believe it possible to build such a world and we shall do everything to ensure success of what is perhaps the most ambitious social goal ever.

The theme of nuclear deterrence has another aspect. In politics one must not forget about the problem of the rational and the irrational. This is particularly so in our complex world where the very content of such notions is most subject to the particular historical experience of the peoples, very different political cultures, traditions and many other factors. It is very difficult to find a common denominator which would seem rational to all. And this confirms the fact that the more nuclear weapons there are, the greater the risk of a fatal malfunction.

Nevertheless the development of more powerful and sophisticated, what are cynically called exotic weapons continues.

The uniqueness, I might even say drama, of the situation, is emphasised by the threat of the arms race spreading into space. If this happened the very idea of arms control would be compromised. Distrust, mutual suspicion and the temptation of being the first to deploy new weapon systems would increase tremendously. Destabilisation would become reality and be fraught with crisis. The risk of accidental war would increase by several orders.

We regret that the continued American testing has put an end to our moratorium. Yet, our initiative has not been wasted.

By our moratorium we showed the world that a nuclear test ban is realistic, provided there is the political will.

I wish to assure this authoritative audience and reply to Dr Lown who urged us to extend the moratorium: the Soviet Union will not relinquish its efforts to get nuclear testing banned and bring about major reduction and eventually entire elimination of nuclear stockpiles.

Now I would like to talk about the passions which flared up in recent days about the deployment of a first phase of SDI. The advocates of deployment insist on "broader interpretation" of the ABM Treaty. Incidentally, while debates on this subject are going on in Washington and between the NATO allies, the administration has already officially suggested in Geneva legitimising such an interpretation. Whatever the pretexts used to justify this, the aim is clearly to bust the treaty. From the very start the political and philosophic essence of the later was to ensure stability due to the absence of anti-missile defence and in this way end the eternal competition between the sword and the shield, which is particularly dangerous in a nuclear age. When the treaty is annulled, the nuclear missile race will acquire new dimensions and will be complemented by the arms race in outer space, the inevitable consequences of which I have just mentioned.

In November 1985 President Reagan and I made the following pledge in Geneva: "To prevent an arms race in space and to terminate it on Earth, to limit and reduce nuclear arms and to enhance strategic stability." This was signed in Geneva in the joint statement. By undermining the ABM Treaty, the US Administration scorns that pledge and the signature the United States put to that termless treaty 15 years ago.

The situation requires stricter observance of international law rather than undermining it or knocking out major elements of it.

Another matter we are considering is why some countries are abrogating a right to invent and develop new weapon systems which, even if not deployed or used, threaten other countries and peoples. This problem transcends the borders of national sovereignty. It is an international problem.

Here is yet another problem. At present

national sovereignty of a state extends to the atmosphere above it. And every state has the right to defend it from intrusion. Weapons in space would create a far greater threat. So the aim of the plans to deploy weapons in space is to create a new instrument of blackmail against independent states. Isn't it time to enter in international law a ban on deployment of any weapons in space?

Now allow me to deal with another major reality of our time. It also requires a new way of thinking. I mean the unprecedented diversity and increasing interconnection and integrity of the world. Our world is united not only by internationalisation of economic life and powerful information and communication media but also faces the common danger of nuclear death, ecological catastrophe and global explosion of the poverty-wealth contradictions of its different regions.

The world today is a multitude of states, each having its unique history, traditions, customs and way of life. Each people and country has its own truth, its own national interests and its own aspirations. This is the most important reality in today's world. It did not exist 30-40 years ago. This is a reality that manifested itself as a result of the choice made by the peoples themselves. They have chosen their path of social development.

However, this process has been faster than the ability of some politicians to grasp the meaning of irreversible change. In the sphere of nuclear weapons and in other spheres they live to old preconceptions.

The way out is also in bridging the gap between the fast pace of events and the realisation of what is going on and what consequences it may have. And this must be done before it is too late.

We know that some leaders still view the world as their domain and declare their "vital interests" wherever they like. This stimulates the arms race because such views result from a policy of strength designed for political and economic domination. This is ingrained, antiquated mentality of the time when it was considered "right" to exploit other peoples, manage their resources and decide their destinies.

These views lead to new regional conflicts and incite hatred. Such conflicts assume dangerous proportions, involving more and more countries as their interests are affected directly or indirectly. Regional conflicts have a very negative impact on international relations as a whole. People are being killed in wars declared and undeclared, at the front and in the rear. Countries suffering from abject poverty and mass hunger are being drawn into a wasteful arms race.

Settlement of regional conflicts is a dictate of our time. And our initiatives on the Middle East may serve as an example of our approach to the problem. It is a major nerve centre on our planet. The interests of many nations, and not only the Arabs and Israel, intersect there. It is a crossroads of histories, religions and cultures. Therefore we believe in the need for a very responsible, cautious and even delicate approach. Power politics, piracy and constant threats of force are unacceptable.

We say: let us search and act together. This applies to the Iran-Iraq war, the Central American crisis, the Afghan problem and the situation in the south of Africa and in Indochina. The main thing is to honour the rights of the peoples to decide their own destiny themselves, not to interfere in the internal affairs of other states.

We are against all attempts to artificially destroy historical ties. Yet, justice requires regulation of international economic activities so that the rich cannot rob the poor. Can one live content in a world where three-quarters of the countries are deep in debt, while a handful of states are omnipotent users? If the situation does not change, there will be a social explosion that could destroy modern civilisation.

A fair political settlement of regional conflicts

is prompted by the same logic of an inter-related and integral world, logic which also requires the solution of other global problems such as food, ecology, energy, and world-wide literacy, education and medical care.

Another plight of the modern world is terrorism. It is a great evil. Yet, as I have said recently, attempts to wipe it out by state-sponsored terrorism are a still greater crime against humanity. This "method" leads to more deaths and undermines international law and the sovereignty of states, and that's not mentioning moral principles and justice. It creates a vicious circle of violence and bloodshed, the overall situation deteriorates.

We have already said at the UN and other international forums — and I would like to say it again today — that we are prepared to co-operate with all other countries in fighting every manifestation of terrorism.

All the problems I have spoken of here today are important and with their solution new vistas will open up before human civilisation. Yet, their dependence on one another is not identical: without halting the arms race we shall not be able to solve any other problems.

The Soviet Union and the Soviet people consider themselves part of an international community. The worries of all mankind are our worries, its pain is our pain and its hopes are our hopes.

With all the differences between us, we must all learn to preserve our one big family of humanity.

At our meeting in Geneva, the US President said that if the Earth faced an invasion by extraterrestrials, the United States and the Soviet Union would join forces to repel such an invasion. I shall not dispute the hypothesis, though I think it's early days to worry about such an intrusion. It is more important to think about the troubles which have entered our common home. It is more important to realise the need to eliminate the nuclear threat and accept that there is no roof on Earth or in space to save us if a nuclear storm broke out.

Our idea of creating a comprehensive system of international security, and our other initiatives clearly show that the Soviet Union is willing and ready to renounce its nuclear power status and reduce all other armaments to a bare essential.

The USSR does not want anything it would deny others and does not seek even an ounce more security than the United States has. However, the Soviet Union will never agree to an abridged status or discrimination.

Look at all our proposals. They don't mean leaving any of our weapons outside negotiations. Our principle is simple: all weapons must be limited and reduced, and those of wholesale annihilation eventually scrapped. Should we have any balance to redress, we must redress it not by letting the one short of some elements build them up, but by having the one with more of them scale them down. The historic goal before us, that of a demilitarised world, will have to be achieved stage by stage, of course. In each phase, there must definitely be respect for mutual interests and a balance of reasonable sufficiency constantly declining. Everybody must realise and agree: parity in a potential to destroy one another several times over is madness and absurdity.

It is important, in our view, while scaling down military confrontation, to carry through such measures as would make it possible to lessen, or better still, altogether exclude the possibility of a surprise attack. The most dangerous offensive arms must be removed from the zone of contact. Quite naturally, military doctrines must be purely of a defensive nature.

I have already had occasion to say that now that we are coming to consider major measures for actual disarmament affecting the most sensitive area of national security, the Soviet Union will be pressing for the most stringent system of supervision and verification, including

international verification. There must be complete certainty that the commitments are honoured by all. Couldn't we take the Soviet-American experiment at Semipalatinsk as a prototype of such supervision?

There is yet another aspect to note as far as verification goes. It is common knowledge that the US has numerous military bases on the territory of other countries. We would like to have an inspection access to them to be sure that there is no activity going on there that is forbidden under any eventual agreement. In this sense, there will apparently, have to be co-operation of the states that host those bases.

Of course, it will be better still to revive the old idea of dismantling foreign bases and bringing the troops stationed there back home. We apply this to ourselves, too. We have already taken the first practical steps. As you know, we are withdrawing some of our forces from the Mongolian People's Republic, upon agreement with our Mongolian friends. We have brought six regiments back from Afghanistan, and we shall pull out the whole of our military contingent within time-limits as short as possible. But there has to be reciprocity on the part of the United States and Afghanistan's neighbours, as well as international efforts to resolve this problem.

We do not claim to know the ultimate truth. We readily respond to proposals made by other countries, political parties, public movements, and just individuals. The Soviet Union has supported the idea of a nuclear-free corridor for Central Europe, and nuclear-free zones for Northern Europe, the Balkans, the South Pacific and other regions. We are ready to hold consultations on each proposal to seek the best version, one that would suit everybody.

Dear Guests,  
Comrades,

A promising and noble idea has been expressed at your forum — that of setting up a "human survival fund". Such an institution could be used for open discussion of ways to avert the threat of nuclear war. The fund could encourage research on the burning international issues and contribute towards drafting projects on the problems facing humanity, including combating the latest baneful diseases.

We would welcome active participation by the Soviet public — both material and intellectual — in the activities of such a fund.

I do not doubt that the good seeds your forum has planted will produce a good crop. The forces of militarism — and they are synonymous as often as not with the forces of ignorance and intellectual sterility — are not omnipotent.

The movement of scientists for elimination of the nuclear danger, the passionate and most competent speeches by physicians, environmentalists, personalities engaged in culture and the arts, and the various anti-nuclear groups and associations are all unmistakable evidence of the determination of the sound-minded people everywhere to save the precious gift of life on earth, perhaps the only one of its kind in the universe.

I see politics and political sciences represented in this audience. And I am wondering whether we can, with the knowledge and the experience we have today, move step by step towards more balanced and harmonious international relations, and towards an all-embracing system of international security, dependable and equal for all. I think we can and must do that.

I think it was the hope and desire to find a positive answer to this question that have brought you to this forum, too.

Our great scientist, Vladimir Vernadsky warned everybody back in 1922 (just imagine, 65 years ago): "It will not be long before man gets hold of atomic energy, such a source of power as will give him an opportunity to build a new way of life as he wants . . . Will man be able to use that power for his own good, not for self-

destruction? Has he learned to use the power that science will certainly give him? Scientists must not close their eyes to the possible implications of their research effort and of scientific progress. They must feel responsibility for the consequences of their discoveries. They must bind their work to better organisation of all humanity."

Just think that over. At one time, the human ambition, without second thought, was to subdue the forces of nature. Now, invading nature without considering all consequences well in advance might turn it into a deadly enemy of humanity. The Chernobyl accident reminded us of that in a tragedy of relatively local proportions. But the nuclear arms race is inexorably pushing us towards universal tragedy.

For centuries, men have been seeking after immortality. It is difficult to accept that every one of us is mortal. But to tolerate the doom of all humanity, of human reason, is just impossible.

Unfortunately, many of our generation have grown accustomed to nuclear weapons. Many have come to see them as a kind of idol demanding more and more sacrifices. Some even declare the nuclear arms race a guarantee of peace.

Alas, nuclear weapons have gone far towards moulding the image of the times we live in. Naturally, destroying them does not mean going back to what was before. Discarding nuclear deterrence must not give free rein to trigger-happy individuals.

This is by no means an idle issue. Some would say the answer is to upgrade other components of military power, conventional arms. That is a bad and wrong way.

Humanity must get stronger and overcome the nuclear sickness and thus enter the post-nuclear age. It will be immune to violence and attempts to dictate to others. Today, international relations are made soulless by the worship of force and the militarisation of mentality. Hence the goal of humanising international relations.

Is that possible? Some believe it is, others think not. No use arguing about it now. I think life will have its way. By and large, the peoples are coming to realise that. They already realise that a nuclear war must never be fought. So let us take the first big step: cut the nuclear arsenals and keep space weapon-free. Let us start from the vantage-ground of Reykjavik, and then move on. And see how that will affect the international atmosphere. My own feeling is that each such step will make for greater confidence and open fresh vistas for co-operation. And more democratic thinking at international level, equality, and independent and active participation of all nations, large, medium and small, in the affairs of the world community must help the process.

To "humanise" international relations, there have to be appropriate actions in the humanitarian field too, notably as regards information, human contacts, professional exchanges, and so on. That will help create moral guarantees for peace and hence contribute towards working out the material guarantees. The information aggression practised by some countries not only leads to mental degradation, but obstructs the normal communication of people of different countries and cultural inter-enrichment. It breeds ill-feeling and alienation between peoples. On the other hand, you must agree that a people that knows and values the culture and art of other peoples can have no ill-feeling towards them.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Comrades,

In view of the rising danger of a new spiral in the arms race and of the drastic exacerbation of regional and, what we call, global problems, we must waste no more time trying to outplay each other and to gain unilateral advantages. The

*(Continued on next page)*

# Appeal by religious leaders participating in the Moscow International Forum

*Here follows the full text of the "Appeal to Joint Efforts" adopted by religious figures participating in the international forum For A Nuclear-Weapon-Free World, for the Survival of Humanity which was held in Moscow on February 14 to 16:*

UNIFIED in heart and mind, we, leaders of Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Shintoist communities in Africa, North and South America, Asia, the Caribbean, Eastern and Western Europe, and the Middle East, appeal to people of faith around the world, to all people of good will, to the leaders of the nations: for God's sake and for the survival and dignity of humanity, lay aside your prejudices, your enmities, your arms and lift up together the banner of peace with justice for all.

We, 215 persons of faith, have come together across the barriers of race, creed, and ideology from 56 nations to consider the tragic and urgent plight of our globe. Together, we are reminded of how small and fragile is this beautiful world entrusted to our care. We shed tears to see it at the brink of possible nuclear destruction, to see so many of its inhabitants suffering the man-made plagues of war, famine and pestilence. We share a common anxiety about its fate.

The decision of the United Nations to declare 1986 the International Year of Peace awakened new hopes. Only two months before, the leaders of the USSR and the USA had agreed that there could be no winners in a nuclear war and to begin new negotiations to curb the nuclear arms race. At the same time, more and more people have committed themselves to the cause of peace, often out of religious convictions. Hopeful proposals have been made, setting out new modes of political thinking and new principles of relations between states in a nuclear age which give priority to universally accepted human values. Sweeping new proposals have been made to eliminate nuclear weapons altogether. At Reykjavik, near agreement was reached to reduce drastically current stockpiles and nuclear

missile deployment.

Yet all these hopes have been dashed. The nuclear arms race threatens more imminently to spread into space, and conventional weapons traders grow ever richer by feeding the flames of war in several terribly destructive regional conflicts. New nuclear disasters have reminded us that human beings have created a technology that can exceed their ability to control it. The arms race continues, both in quality and in scope, with disastrous consequences, especially for the poor whose meagre resources it drains at an increasing pace.

And yet we do not despair. We continue to believe in the power of prayer, and together we trust that God will lead humanity out of this wilderness. We believe in wise actions guided by the sages. It is not too late to replace the threat or use of armed force with dialogue. It is not too late to return to the policy of detente and co-operation and to develop new confidence and trust among peoples divided by irrational hatred and enmity. It is not too late to develop a shared notion of common security among the inescapably interdependent nations of the world. The time has come for concrete actions before it does become too late. People of religion have special roles to play, among them:

- promoting unity among the peoples;
- increasing contacts across lines of division;
- improving the spiritual and devotional life of human communities;
- helping to eliminate prejudicial enemy images;
- and intensifying education for peace.

Many of us have been meeting together in peace gatherings for decades building bonds of trust and confidence among ourselves. Our experience is a hopeful one. We call upon the policy makers and leaders of the nations to commit themselves as well to continuing

dialogue. Urgent steps are necessary now to end the arms race. But a commitment to stay the course is essential if the shared aspirations of humankind for the elimination of all nuclear weapons is ultimately to be realised.

We appeal especially to the leaders of the principal nuclear nations to:

— declare once and for all that the alternative of nuclear war is immoral and humanly unacceptable;

— renounce the doctrines of nuclear deterrence and mutually assured destruction;

— respect without question existing nuclear weapons treaties such as the ABM Treaty;

— proceed immediately to conclude new treaties in consonance with the hope for a nuclear-free world rekindled in Reykjavik.

While we have not come here to align ourselves with the policies of any particular nation we applaud on its merits an unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing as a confidence-building measure of the highest order. It deserves a positive response. All nuclear states should enter into a common moratorium calling a halt now to all nuclear testing. We also believe the goal of ridding the world of nuclear weapons, by mutually-agreed stages, by the year 2000 is necessary, urgent and achievable. But for either of these things to happen, all the peoples of the world, especially the citizens of the major nuclear powers, must engage in renewed massive efforts. The unilateral actions taken already by some states to reduce their military forces and budgets are welcome and encouraging.

We appeal to all to commit themselves unalterably to this task of building the basis for common security today. Time has come for us to ask the ancient questions: if not me, who? If not now, when?

May god make us faithful stewards of this world which we hold in trust for future generations, and guide us all in the blessed paths of peace. □

## Moscow Forum: peace to man and nature

THE topics for discussions involving doctors and medical scientists at the forum have ranged all the way from earthly problems to issues concerning outer space.

When the warning that nuclear war is a mortal threat to all people on Earth comes from physicians, it sounds especially convincing as the people making it reply on the findings of their research into medical, biological and psychological effects of the nuclear threat.

Their prescribed means of preventive treatment as the most urgently needed first step is an

*(Continued from previous page)*

stake in such a game is too high — the survival of humanity. Therefore, it is now vital to take the critical factor of time into account.

So let the ideas of this forum reach every corner on Earth, hasten enlightenment and broaden mutual understanding. Let your efforts help the advance towards a nuclear-weapon free and non-violent world — for the sake of the immortality of human civilisation.

(Moscow, February 16, 1987)

immediate end to nuclear testing.

Although the debates, held in the Soviet Academy of Medical Sciences, have been going on behind closed doors participants have willingly shared their own opinions and judgements with journalists.

A Soviet moratorium on all nuclear explosions, which has been observed for one and a half years, has been among the most frequently mentioned subjects.

"It cannot remain unilateral for ever, just as unreturned love cannot last for long," said Soviet Physician Cosmonaut Oleg Atkov.

Professor Karl Bonhoeffer of West Germany, for his part, said that, like many of his colleagues, he was worried by the fact that the United States was not going to follow the Soviet lead as demonstrated by its recent test explosions in Nevada.

"It'll be a pity, of course, if the USSR resumes testing but one can quite understand the legitimacy of this step," he added.

Bonhoeffer said that he shared the concern of many physicians also about the US intention to press on with the 'Strategic Defense Initiative'.

"It is a senseless and dangerous undertaking,"

he said. "No level-headed person can agree to arms deployments in outer space."

Most participants in the discussion on ecological problems at the forum expressed concern over the growing process of polluting the environment.

They discussed from various aspects the issues of ecology and the campaign for mankind's survival.

Expressing the opinion of his colleagues, the well-known Soviet chemist, Academician Igor Petryanov-Sokolov said that protection of the

*(Continued on next page)*

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# Press conference by participants in Moscow Forum

THE results of the international forum For a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World, for the Survival of Humanity were the subject of a press conference given for Soviet and foreign journalists at the Press Centre of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs on February 16.

Addressing correspondents, Academician Yevgeni Velikhov, Chairman of the Soviet Scientists' Committee in Defence of Peace, Against the Nuclear Threat, described the event that had taken place in Moscow as a historic one.

The forum drew about a thousand participants who with professional interest took part in the work of eight round-table panels. Most diverse issues were discussed.

Natural scientists considered, in particular, the issues of nuclear tests monitoring, the search for ways to nuclear disarmament and European security, and the problems connected with cessation of nuclear tests, with space weaponry, and with the correlation between defence and attack systems.

The international forum, the academician emphasised, reflects the tradition of the Soviet Union, the government of which is always ready to listen to the opinion of scientists, representatives of the business community and creative intellectuals, those who represent all the spectra of public opinion.

However, not all possible spectra of public

opinion could be represented at the forum. The academician pointed out the fact that the US Department of State as well as a number of various organisations of other Western countries had not recommended people to go to this forum.

On a number of technical problems, there were no opponents at the forum. Therefore, it was decided to send the materials of the discussions to laboratories of various countries for commentaries.

We shall also acquaint the Soviet Government and all other governments with them. For no one to be able to accuse the participants in the forum that they spend working hours for social activities, the forum went on during official rest days.

Sharing his impressions of the meeting between the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee and the participants in the session, Professor John Kenneth Galbraith (USA) said:

"I was impressed by the strong commitment to peace, to peaceful coexistence which was voiced in the Kremlin today. This is a mood that I think all of us share. To a certain extent we are at one and the same side of the negotiating table. I hope that now we shall succeed in resisting the immense threat."

We think in tune with what we heard in Mikhail Gorbachev's speech, Metropolitan Juvenaly (USSR) told journalists. "How accurately he expressed in his metaphoric phrase: 'There

would be no second Noah's Ark for a nuclear deluge.' In this way Mikhail Gorbachev put it as an excellent theologian would.

"Religious figures in the world can contribute towards unity among nations, help towards eliminating the biased 'enemy images'."

In answer to a question about the development of openness in the USSR, Peter Ustinov, writer and film director from Britain, said, in particular, that the openness now existing in the USSR was an example which other countries might follow.

"We should say what we think, show goodwill in relations between people, and respect the opinions of one another. This is what, in my view, is essential for the dissemination of the new thinking. This is what our civilisation is now lacking."

"The cold war has launched enormous stereotyping, preventing the resolution of topical issues, including social ones," said Dr Bernard Lown (USA). "In this nuclear age, a new way of thinking is necessary, and the new way of thinking means that you cannot apply old thinking to the twenty-first century's problems."

In that connection he emphasised that huge funds are spent every year in the world on the arms race at a time when there are outstanding acute social problems in the world.

"If the arms race is continued and if we do not resolve the nuclear problem, we shall have nothing to think about any longer." □

(Continued from previous page)

environment became global problem number two after the threat of nuclear death. The arms race is criminal. It is enough to take 2-3 per cent of its funds to be able to resolve many global ecological problems. It is also important to point out that the thesis on a new mode of thinking in the nuclear age is also applicable to people's attitude to nature.

Bulgarian Vasselin Neykov, secretary of the board of the international movement Ecoforum for Peace, said that mankind was now endangered by a two-pronged offensive: the menace of war and of ecological catastrophe. Therefore, the debate focuses on the ecological consequences of a possible nuclear conflict as well as on the problems of the increased impact of mankind's activity on nature.

The reduction of nuclear armaments by 50 per cent and more will not damage the security of either of the sides. This conclusion was drawn simultaneously by the Soviet and American scientists who had conducted research independently of each other using different methods. Professor Frank von Hippel from Princeton University, US, said at a briefing organised after a round-table conference of scientists held within the framework of the international forum.

Professor Boix-Amat of Argentina drew attention to the danger of an accidental outbreak of a nuclear conflict. He explained that the danger was growing along with a further stockpiling of nuclear weapons.

Soviet scientist Lev Semeiko said that the obsolete stereotypes like, for instance, "the one who dominates the seas rules the world, the one who dominates space imposes its will on all countries", hampered the reaching of agreements on disarmament problems. The nuclear

age calls for a new thinking which includes the rejection of confrontation and a complete elimination of nuclear weapons. The summit meeting in Reykjavik showed that nuclear disarmament was possible.

"We are now living through an extremely important historic period. An opportunity opens to find a better way for millions of people, to ensure world peace. Nuclear catastrophe must be averted no matter what. This is why I came here for the Moscow International Forum," said prominent Italian actor Gian Maria Volonte. "I think workers in art, workers in culture can exert a great influence on the change of the political climate, can promote the achievement of mutual understanding. They can and must contribute to the consolidation of peace."

Peter Ustinov, prominent British writer and actor, said with a smile that he never cherished any special hopes about any meetings, but that he always held that it is good when people meet. He said that this time he was eagerly awaiting a meeting with Mikhail Gorbachev even if he will be able only to wave a hand in greeting. He said this gesture would mean that outside the Soviet Union there are many people who have respect for the Soviet Union and who watch with interest changes taking place in the USSR.

Prominent Swiss writer Friedrich Duerrenmatt said he is sceptical by nature and has little hope that a writer's word can have a decisive impact on the minds of people. And yet the role of literature in the world today is great and writers can promote a successful solution of the most important task of the present, to ensure a nuclear-free world, he said.

Developing this thought, Egyptian film-maker Chairman of the Arab Association of Film-Makers Saad el-Din Wahba expressed the confidence that literature and art can do much to shape public opinion, to assert the ideas of humanism and peace. "We live in a very complex

and troubled time. Israeli aggressors heighten tension in the Middle East. A fratricidal Iran-Iraq war goes on. Nuclear explosions are continued in Nevada. This is why no task is more important now than that of saving the world from nuclear catastrophe. And it is only by the joint efforts of all people of goodwill that this can be achieved." □

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# Mikhail Gorbachev addresses officials of the Soviet mass media

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV had a meeting at the Party Central Committee with senior officials of the Soviet mass media, it was reported on February 13. Questions related to the January 1987 plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee were raised at the meeting.

Commenting on the importance of the plenary meeting, Mikhail Gorbachev said that its main idea was to broaden democracy in every field on the socialist basis. "Not away from socialism but more socialism, not away from democracy, but more democracy, not away from socialist morality but for socialist morality."

"The tasks the plenary meeting set out to accomplish were to formulate the theory and policy of reorganisation and to translate the policy line worked out by the 27th CPSU Congress into practical work in every field.

"The materials of the plenary meeting are a programme of action for the Party for many years to come. They also are a programme of work for the press," Mikhail Gorbachev stressed. He noted that the materials of the plenary meeting "define ways of achieving a new qualitative condition of Soviet society, which is the cardinal task of the development of socialism."

"The new is being born and asserted in struggle and is standing the test of life, of practice. Reorganisation is growing broader and deeper and assuming the form of a concrete policy.

"There is no alternative to reorganisation. Our entire society arrived at it through pain and suffering. Reorganisation must be supported, defended, and advanced.

"The ideas of the plenary meeting call for continuous, day-to-day thorough and constructive work. What is most important, these ideas must be made to work, they must take on flesh. The role of the press here is irreplaceable," Mikhail Gorbachev stressed. "We need a dialogue with the people, we need to keep extensive counsel with them. What we need is close unity of action between the Party and the people."

"The decisions of the plenary meeting are being discussed in work collectives and are fully supported. What is especially important to us, they are being supported with deeds. Everyone should tune up to such a pace in work. More efficiency and less general discourses on the usefulness of reorganisation should be the keynote of the mass media today.

"Deep-going truly fundamental change is taking place in society. It calls for immense expenditures of strength, energy and initiative, for a creative approach to business, persevering struggle against inertia and outmoded attitudes, revision in the mentality of cadres, a new thinking and a new style of work. The press can and must do a good deal here," Mikhail Gorbachev said.

Touching upon the propaganda of advanced experience, the General Secretary noted that "we must and will support everything that strengthens socialism and fortifies the human spirit. People are the main protagonists of reorganisation and it is people, working people, who must be in the focus of attention of the press and television."

"The question of openness and the charter of criticism are organically linked to the Party's care for advanced experience. Openness, as was noted at the January plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee, is both an indispensable condition of the process of democratisation in our society and one of the most important

guarantees of the ongoing change being irreversible."

Touching upon the role of criticism, Mikhail Gorbachev commended critical publications in the press, which helped overcome shortcomings. "To scale down criticism means to stop advance and to harm reorganisation, and this will never happen. Openness, criticism and self-criticism are a policy of principle and a norm of our way of life."

Stressing the need for criticism to be analytical, truthful and constructive, Mikhail Gorbachev said that "criticism means responsibility, and the more stinging it is, the more responsible it should be. When criticising, the press and television should provoke serious thoughts and encourage work rather than the writing of denials."

"The process of democratisation is introducing substantial corrections in the relationship between critics and those who are criticised, between inspectors and those who are inspected. These relations should become those of partners and reply on common interest. What is needed here is dialogue while high-handed lectures and posturing, let alone the procurator's tone, are totally unacceptable," he said. He told the media officials to remember that "in the last instance no one has the right to the truth."

Turning to the historical past of the country, Mikhail Gorbachev said that "there should be no forgotten names or blanks either in history or literature. On the eve of the 70th anniversary of the Great October Revolution of ours, those who made that revolution must not be pushed into the background. People must be educated in the example of those who laid down their lives for the revolution and socialism."

"We should cherish every year of our 70-year Soviet history. The Party already discussed the bad things and we are not going to present them in rosy colours today.

"We must not forget names and it is all the more immoral to forget or pass over in silence large periods in the life of the people, who were living, believing and working under the leadership of the Party for socialism. History must be seen for what it is.

"The Party has already passed its judgement on mistakes and miscalculations, on our delusions. But even at that time, the most difficult time, the Party was living and fighting," the speaker continued. "There were differing things, joyful and bitter. Whatever happened to us, we kept advancing."

The nationalities problem requires special attention, Mikhail Gorbachev went on to say. "We are for a respectful attitude to national sentiments, history, culture and the languages of all peoples, for full and actual equality."

"We live in a multi-nation country, and inattention to these questions are dangerous. Unfortunately, we at times evaluated the state of affairs in this respect in the form of toasts. But this is real life with all its diversity.

"On the one hand, the cultural level of all peoples and nationalities, of even the smallest ones, rises, and their own intelligentsia has emerged. They study the roots of their origin. At times this leads to the deification of history and of everything associated with it and not only of progressive things.

"On the other hand, new generations enter into life, and they should be educated and provided with up-to-date notions of where they live and how this most unique phenomenon in human history has been established, with more than a hundred nations and nationalities living in concord and getting on well, judging even by big historic yardsticks.

"Nevertheless, this is actual life, movement, development, and therefore, each stage may have its own contradictions. One should tackle all that calmly, study, resolve, and educate. The Leninist policy of nationalities and the spirit of Lenin are the only true approach in this endeavour.

"We have viewed and are viewing the nationalities problem and will tackle it only from internationalist positions," he emphasised.

When speaking of Soviet literature, Mikhail Gorbachev said that it "was busy preparing society for changes and stirring public conscience. Some publicists boldly champion the ideas which nowadays have gained the force of Party and state decisions in the economy, culture and education."

"It would seem that now that conditions have changed, it is legitimate to observe an upsurge in writings on social affairs. There are, actually, individual successes. But at times writer-publicists, instead of the new word, are in a hurry to complete what they did not say before.

"The 27th Congress of the CPSU made the question of the truth of artistic depiction the focus of attention of all sections of the intelligentsia. At a turning-point we as never before are in need of an objective and comprehensive vision of actuality. The truth must be complete. Only then will it possess the quality of constructiveness."

Media officials in their speeches expressed unanimous support for the decisions of the January plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee.

It was pointed out that the Party is bringing the country to a qualitatively new and, virtually, a revolutionary stage of the development of Soviet society. In-depth and bold theoretical analysis of the state of affairs that took shape at the turn of the seventies and eighties, and precise identification of urgent problems, and specific indication of ways to solve them are impressive. The Central Committee's approach arouses the feeling of profound respect and patriotic pride and makes all journalists keen on working for renewal.

Many speakers pointed out that reorganisation became a reality, but a contradictory and complex one. In these conditions journalists are called upon to describe the organisation as it is, and not as it is seen from the window of this or that office.

The participants in the meeting said that Party-spirited boldness and Party-spirited responsibility for the ideological and artistic level of publications are required of journalists, men of letters, and workers in art in the conditions of wide democracy and openness.

The attitude of those publicists and men of letters who take up an attitude of casual observer and write about shortcomings and problems with a shade of some aloofness was criticised.

Publications the authors of which keenly and critically research into complex reality, but in so doing show civic interest in curing social ills, and engage in a creative quest, were supported.

The active attitude of the author is of importance. He should convey a positive charge, a charge of advance, a life-giving charge with his entire mood and approach as he criticises what is worthless.

It was pointed out that an all-people's front keen on reorganisation is being virtually formed in the country now. The Party unites people in support of big ideas. Thus, this is how it was in the crucial period of our socialist history, and this is how it is now. Herein is the continuity and consistency of our historical road. □

# Meeting of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee

THE Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee approved at its regular meeting on February 12 the results of Mikhail Gorbachev's talks with Ali Salim al-Baidh, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Yemen Socialist Party, and also the results of the talks of Soviet leaders with the party and government delegation of the Peoples Democratic Republic of Yemen.

The Political Bureau noted with satisfaction the identical positions of the two sides on bilateral relations and the situation in the Middle East and in the world as a whole. Stress was laid on the CPSU's solidarity with the efforts of the South Yemen leadership to strengthen the progressive regime and consolidate the international positions of the republic. Instructions were given to the relevant ministries and departments to broaden co-operation with Democratic Yemen along Party and state lines.

The Political Bureau heard Eduard Shevardnadze's account of the results of his visit to the

GDR and Czechoslovakia.

The Political Bureau reviewed the economic performance of the country in January 1987. It noted that the fuel and energy complex and a number of other industries and industrial plants continued to make good progress in accordance with plan targets. More milk and meat was purchased in agriculture than in January last year. However, industry as a whole fell short of its production targets for January. The plan targets for many types of industrial output in kind were not reached. The volume of capital construction shrank.

It was noted during the discussion of the situation that those shortfalls were caused primarily by shortcomings in organisational and managerial work, the unsatisfactory preparations of some industries and regions of the country for more stringent demands on the economic performance of amalgamations and enterprises, and also difficulties in railway transport, construction and other economic fields due to the rigorous winter.

The decision was taken to convert amalgamations, enterprises and organisations in

industry and other sectors of the national economy to work in several shifts. This is to be introduced in 1987-1988. The production floor space released as a result will be used to modernise workshops and production lines, expand the output of the more important products, primarily consumer goods, and also resolve the social problems of work collectives, while the money saved on the construction of new industrial projects will be used to build housing and improve working and living conditions.

Having heard Andrei Gromyko's account of the results of the work of the USSR Supreme Soviet in 1986, the Political Bureau stressed the importance of further improvements in the activities of the higher representative bodies of government, the more active work of the commissions of the Chambers of the USSR Supreme Soviet and the Deputies, and the drafting and adoption of legislation to democratise social life, broaden openness, strengthen socialist legality and ensure the active participation of the working people in the solution of all problems of state and social life.

A decision was taken on relief to Georgia in eliminating the consequences of natural disasters.

The Political Bureau considered preparations for the next elections to the local soviets of people's deputies and also the elections of people's judges and people's assessors to the district (city) people's courts. Following the resolutions of the January 1987 plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee, some alterations in the electoral practices were found advisable.

The Political Bureau also discussed some other questions of domestic and foreign policies. □

## Electoral practices to change

SOME CHANGES will be introduced to Soviet electoral practice this year, TASS reported on February 17.

The Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union last week recognised it as advisable to do that in view of the approaching elections of deputies of local government bodies as well as of people's judges and assessors of district courts. Their term of office expires at the end of summer.

What is the purpose and what will be the manifestation of the changes, a TASS correspondent asked Yuri Korolev, head of a department at the secretariat of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet (Parliament).

"Firstly," he said, "it should be pointed out that changes in electoral practice will be effected in line with the decisions of the CPSU Central Committee's plenary meeting which was held at the end of January.

"It dealt with the need to deepen the democratism of the Soviet electoral system. This will be the aim of the expected changes.

"Secondly, I would like to emphasise that the point is not to replace the current electoral system with some other one. The idea is to refine the already existing system which has on the whole justified itself.

"It is understandable that it is practically

impossible to do such a complex thing within a short period of time. A draft document on the introduction of changes to the electoral system of the USSR will require not only thorough preparation.

"In accordance with the constitution of the USSR, such a draft document is to be brought up for country-wide discussion and only after all additions and suggestions are taken into account may a draft document be submitted to a Supreme Soviet session which will consider and adopt it. All this will take time.

"It is clear that there will not be enough time to do that before the elections which are to be held this summer. However, the reorganisation cannot wait.

"This is why it has been decided to promptly introduce some changes not to the electoral system (this is still a matter for the future) but to electoral practice.

"These changes, considering the factor of time again, will apparently concern not the entire country at once. More than 50,000 Soviets are to be re-elected this summer. This means more than two million deputies. Therefore it would be advisable to test the novelty at first.

"It would be possible to select one district in each territory and region of the country where by way of experiment elections will be held already this year according to a somewhat different procedure than was the case previously.

"What would be the difference specifically? The difference will lie, say, in the number of candidates running for the soviets and in holding elections in enlarged electoral districts.

"As far as unelected worthy candidates are concerned, it would be possible to view them as deputy candidates, or as a reserve pool of candidates for the soviets, as is done in a number of socialist countries.

"The election of directors of enterprises is now being started in the USSR, and the practice of electing the heads of party committees is becoming more democratic.

"Novelties in this year's elections to the local soviets will become part of the development of this democratic tendency in the life of the Soviet Union," Yuri Korolev said. □

## Expanding Co-operative activity in USSR

THE Soviet Government has considerably broadened the sphere of the co-operatives' activity. Three resolutions by the USSR Council of Ministers published on February 11 allow the setting up of co-operatives producing consumer goods, providing consumer services to the population, and also public catering co-operatives. Co-operatives can better satisfy the population's demands in those areas where state organisations fail to keep up with this demand fully.

For instance, in addition to the system of state-run enterprises, co-operatives can set up small-batch production of goods which are in strong demand. In doing so, they are to orientate them at using mostly secondary materials and local raw material.

Co-operatives for providing consumer services to the population, which can now be established, will repair flats, help cultivate orchard and vegetable plots, repair cars and provide custom-made furniture for the population. Co-operatives can be set up whose members will take care of children when their parents are at work, and of sick and disabled people. Co-operative hair-dressing salons will evidently appear as well. Various intermediary services are also allowed to be provided on co-operative principles.

The third type of new co-operatives are restaurants, cafeterias, snack bars and other catering establishments.

The principles for creating co-operatives are universal: they should be founded by not fewer than three people. Mostly non-working people — pensioners, housewives and students — can be members of the co-operative. Others are allowed to work in the co-operative only in their spare time. □

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