

Mikhail Gorbachev's speech at reception for ASTEC officials

ON April 11 Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, gave a reception in the Kremlin on the occasion of the holding in Moscow of the 11th annual meeting of members of the American-Soviet Trade and Economic Council (ASTEC).

Present at the reception were comrades Viktor Nikonov, Nikolai Ryzhkov, Nikolai Slyunkov, Eduard Shevardnadze, Alexander Yakovlev, Yuri Maslyukov, Anatoli Dobrynin, First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR Vsevolod Murakhovsky, Deputy Chairmen of the Council of Ministers of the USSR Vladimir Gusev, Vladimir Kamentsev, Ivan Silayev, the heads of a number of ministries and agencies, directors of ASTEC from the Soviet side and other officials.

Present from the American side were the US Secretary of Commerce William Verity, Co-Chairman of ASTEC from the US side Dwayne Andreas, President of ASTEC James Giffen, ASTEC directors R. Mahoney, J. Murphy and A. Ozmetel, the US Ambassador in the USSR Jack Matlock and representatives of the American business community.

Mikhail Gorbachev made the following speech at the reception:

Esteemed Secretary William Verity,

Esteemed Mr Dwayne Andreas, leaders of the US-USSR Trade and Economic Council,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Comrades,

I greet you here in Moscow, and do that with pleasure. Your arrival is a good sign both for Soviet-American relations and for the atmosphere around the world in general.

We live in an interesting period of time. I think that you have come to Moscow in this composition not merely for considerations of your business. Although now we are not inclined to underestimate this aspect of your interest either.

I have been following with attention lately the sentiments in the American business community. I know personally many of its representatives. We have met in Moscow and in Washington.

All this allows me to think that your interest in us rests on a basis that is more profound than mere professional interest.

The dilemma as to where the world will go is now being keenly discussed everywhere. The entire conscious part of mankind would like to see Soviet-American relations to become at last a constructive factor for world process.

I'm sure you are interested to know what our assessment of the present-day international situation is. Detailed analysis would probably be out of place here. I will limit myself to general evaluations.

We believe that the situation has changed for the better, that a window of hope has opened a little. The possibilities of finding solutions to complicated issues engendered in the years of the cold war have become more apparent.

The bedrock causes of the changes are in line with the mighty and ominous objective processes that have sharply intensified their pace by the turn of the century — in the scientific and technological direction, in the arms race, in world economy, in the Third World, in the fields of ecology, power engineering, information, and so on.

This has generated universal anxiety along with greater responsibility — not only for national affairs, but also for the destinies of the entire world.

The lag in the realisation of the course of world developments which ever more persistently demand the adoption of measures capable of averting baneful consequences has become more obvious.

Mutual understanding

People have started feeling more acutely the rapidly increasing interrelationship and interdependence of today's world.

Many states, public movements and parties have contributed to understanding the new realities and ensuing political imperatives.

Intellectuals, researchers, outstanding scientists and workers of culture have made an invaluable contribution. And I ought to say that a considerable contribution has been made by business circles. Among those present here are people known not only for what they have accomplished in the field of business, but also for their public, I would say, political activity.

They have placed their vigour, business capabilities and art of communication at the service of mutual understanding and facilitated the practical solution of a number of international issues.

We state with satisfaction — which I felt especially clearly during my visit to Washington — that the Americans are changing their attitudes towards the USSR. There is now more understanding, less suspicion. Thoughtful interest is taking the place of mere curiosity.

But we don't want to be over modest. Something did depend on us, too. I think that perestroika, or restructuring, and our new thinking have played their part, now generally recognised, in altering the international situation.

You are staying in Moscow on the days when perestroika is already marking its first three years. I have said "already", but then immediately thought: "only three years." For it is planned for a long period of time. The tasks that it is to handle are truly historic, truly revolutionary.

Nevertheless, we have entered the second stage of perestroika and are approaching its

very important mark — the 19th All-Union Party Conference.

The first stage, to speak in general terms, is a stage of contemplation, analysis, strict self-criticism and self-realisation of Soviet society. Not armchair analysis, not scientific study only, but involving the people.

This is the fundamental, basic distinguishing feature of the entire process of perestroika.

See how the Soviet people have squared their shoulders and revealed their potentialities. What amount of energy, initiative and readiness to take part in the common cause has been shown. How many original minds and talents have appeared in such a brief period.

Naturally, an acute confrontation, I would even say, clash of views, has begun. The passionate defence of socialist values and profound dissatisfaction with the way we have been using them, the way we disposed of the gains of our great revolution. The process is not simple, there is struggle, but it takes place on the socialist platform. I would like to warn against any delusions on this account on the part of those who watch this struggle from aside.

Yes, there is lack of understanding, there is unwillingness to change something radically, to give up things convenient and customary. But the principal trend of the debate is constructive and dynamic, based on the striving that we realised through much suffering to improve our society, to translate into life all its potentialities.

Debates of this kind are under way in all sections of our society, in all spheres of life — from economy to literature and arts. This, we believe, is good and useful for perestroika.

We feel the positive results of the true socialist pluralism of opinion. It holds a promise of unprecedented growth of society's intellectual potential.

I know that our perestroika generates immense interest in the West. We regard this as a desire to understand what are the possibilities of the positive development both of Soviet-American and international relations for the near and the extended perspective.

And, as I have already said and written on several occasions, we want to be understood correctly. Quite a lot, by the way, has already been done about that.

True, when the first meeting with ASTEC participants took place two and a half years ago, there was on the credit side only Geneva with its historic statement by both sides that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought, while now there is Reykjavik and Washington and one and a half months from now there will also be Moscow.

So the past two and a half years have seen three summits and preparations for a fourth. The foreign ministers of the United States and the USSR have met 23 times. The first official meeting of the defence ministers has taken place.

This means that the Soviet-American dialogue has been gaining in dynamism. Its subject has been the major problems of the times. And it has been marked by new attitudes and a gradual overcoming of stereotypes.

Just a few years ago it seemed unrealistic even to predict the possibility of agreements

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between the USSR and the US on nuclear weapons, whereas now the INF Treaty has demonstrated to the whole world that the path of reducing nuclear armories, which leads to their complete elimination, is a real one.

We are not prone to underestimate the difficulties standing in the way of an agreement on 50 per cent cuts in strategic offensive arms. The most sensitive aspects of the security of both countries are affected.

At the same time we are convinced that this goal is attainable in the immediate future if both sides are guided by the fundamental approach agreed at the meetings of the US and Soviet leaders rather than by momentary considerations and political opportunism.

One of the more urgent tasks is to secure a complete prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons. This, too, is a global task and should be tackled precisely as such rather than from the standpoint of the interests of individual political groups or private companies.

In another highly important issue of world politics — the issue of reducing conventional armaments and armed forces — it is time as well to proceed from propaganda stereotypes to practical action.

You are aware of our proposals for exchanging relevant data concerning Europe and for talks to eliminate asymmetries by lowering the general level of armed forces.

This is yet another demonstration of our business-like attitude.

Tomorrow, April 14, an event is to take place, which is, for its international implications, on a par perhaps with the INF Treaty. We hope that the signing of the Geneva Accords on Afghanistan will lend an impulse to the process of settling regional conflicts.

Responsibility

By participating — as mediators and official guarantors — in settling the Afghanistan problem, the USSR and the US create a precedent of constructive interaction, which is needed so badly to improve international relations in general.

And if third countries get a possibility to shape their foreign policies with regard not for the all-out rivalry, but for a reasonable, realistic interaction of Washington and Moscow, this will change the entire nature of international contacts.

The pluralism of interests in the world around us will then mean diverse possibilities for the peaceful coexistence of states and peoples rather than multiple antagonisms.

Such is the level of responsibility of the USSR and the US before the rest of the world. And it becomes ever more absurd to preserve a situation where two great countries, with a quarter to a third of the world's scientific and technological potential concentrated in each of them, are continuing to realise their potentialities in relations with each other as yet mostly through a race in monstrous weapons.

I think that over the past 40 years we have proved to each other well enough that no-one can take the upper hand in this baneful competition. And so isn't it time to begin converting both the economy and, I would say, the political mentality, to begin demilitarising it?

New thinking should, at long last, enter the sphere of economic relations.

From this point of view, our perestroika is an invitation to work out a new system of coordinates in the economic relationship between our socially and ideologically different countries.

There are and will be serious differences between our countries. But the times demand that these differences not be a source of enmity and begin being used, as far as this is possible, as a

stimulus to mutually advantageous competition.

They can become mutually supplementary components of the world economy in the twenty-first century.

What we have already been able to do in the Soviet economy during the time of perestroika convinces us of this.

We have set the task of overhauling the economic structure on the basis of the latest achievements in science and engineering. Along with radical economic reform, the new structural policy will assure us of a social and economic speed-up.

New priorities have been picked out already for the current five-year plan period.

The output of finished products — machines, equipment and consumer goods — is to grow faster than the production of fuel, raw materials and semi-finished products.

Growth rates in the manufacturing industries are to be 2.2 times up on those in the fuel and raw materials industries.

Another distinct feature of the speed-up is the planned pace of development for the high-technology industries, especially mechanical engineering. The latter sector's output is to grow by 41 to 43 per cent, while its basic industries — machine-tool building, instrument making and electrical engineering — are to grow by 55 to 70 per cent.

Housing

Over the past two years the mechanical engineering sector has begun manufacturing over 4,500 new types of machines, equipment and instruments corresponding to world standards, while discontinuing the production of over 5,800 outdated types of machines and equipment.

Here are two examples: the Zhdanovtyazh-mash Production Amalgamation has developed a unique combined-blast converter with a holding capacity of 370 tonnes, which can compete with similar foreign systems.

A 32-byte computer complex of enhanced productivity for computer-aided designer systems and systems for controlling flexible automated productions at the most up-to-date level has been developed and its construction has been started.

The transfer of foreign-trade functions to machinebuilders has also played a positive role. The supply for export of machinery, equipment, instruments, and other products of machinebuilding for freely convertible currency increased in one year by 30 per cent. In the current year the deliveries will increase by 150 per cent.

The reconstruction of machinebuilding will make it possible to create a real basis for retooling all production capacities in the country.

The increment of the gross national product over two years made up eight per cent.

There are positive changes in social development.

The average monthly wages went up by 5.9 per cent.

One hundred and twenty-four point eight million square metres of housing is commissioned on an average a year, an increase of 13 per cent as against the previous five-year period. Serious changes have begun in the health services and public education.

In agriculture, the average annual gross harvests of grain went up by 17 per cent, the production of meat by 13 per cent, of milk and eggs by 9 per cent. All this is a reality.

Foreign economic relations have been assigned a reasonable place in the solution of economic tasks of perestroika. Good prospects would open in this area along the Soviet-American direction, too, if it were not for the calculations persisting in the USA to take advantage of economic ties as an instrument of interference.

During my visit to the USA I became increasingly convinced that there are

opportunities to get our trade and economic relations off the ground.

But, speaking in the language of our perestroika, there also is a need for breaking up the mechanism of retardation in this area. I have already had occasions to mention this.

As regards the possibilities of invigorating trade and economic relations, I mean not only their traditional aspect, but also new directions, including joint business ventures, joint participation in major projects for the benefit of the entire humanity (peaceful uses of outer space, including a joint flight to Mars, combating diseases, ecology, thermonuclear fusion, and so on).

We have started radically restructuring our foreign economic activity, are bringing up to date the existing mechanism and at times simply changing its composite parts.

The number of economic organisations that have been granted the right to do business outside the country is growing rapidly.

Thirty-three joint enterprises with foreign firms have already been set up.

They include the first representatives of the US business — Combustion Engineering, and Management Partnership International. I would like to hail these pioneers in a new form of co-operation with the Soviet Union.

Some 50 new projects are to be started. Protocols of intent concerning them have been signed.

I would like to note that as regards the creation of joint ventures with US firms, we bear in mind not only the use of well-tryed US technologies and equipment but also a no less widespread industrial mastering of Soviet scientific and technological developments.

We regard the formation of the American Trade Consortium and of its partner in the USSR, the Soviet Foreign Economic Consortium, as a major event in our relations. A protocol of intent on the creation of joint ventures was signed today.

Economic relations

For our part we shall be rendering all-round support to the Soviet participants in the consortium and we hope for a similar approach from the US Administration.

We are prepared for active co-operation not only with large firms but also with medium and small firms. Business with smaller firms has been showing effectiveness and profitability at a rather high scientific, technological and commercial level, of which we are aware.

We even try to apply something from its practice to the organisation of our industry.

I have been told that at this session you have approved on the whole the basic principles and guidelines of the development of commercial and economic relations between the USSR and the USA. This is a very good undertaking. The task now is to prepare them for signing.

Indeed it is time to have some basis in the context of international law that would ensure the mutual interests of firms and organisations with due account for the new conditions.

In short, there is a need to get rid of the legacy of the cold war also in this area.

I would like to touch upon another matter.

The USSR and the USA with their historic responsibility in the world community cannot escape responsibility for a drastic improvement of relations in the whole world.

I don't know whether or not you will agree with me but the matter looks as if the situation in the world economy is getting more complicated, the symptoms of growing troubles and instability increase, whether the problems of indebtedness or the situation in the world's main money markets is concerned.

(continued on page 145)

Geneva Accords on the situation around Afghanistan signed

We give here the documents on a political settlement relating to Afghanistan, which were signed in Geneva on April 14, 1988.

AGREEMENT ON PRINCIPLES OF MUTUAL RELATIONS

Follows the full text of the bilateral agreement between the Republic of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on the principles of mutual relations, in particular on non-interference and non-intervention:

The Republic of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, hereinafter referred to as the high contracting parties,

Desiring to normalise relations and promote good-neighbourliness and co-operation as well as to strengthen international peace and security in the region,

Considering that full observance of the principle of non-interference and non-intervention in the internal and external affairs of states is of the greatest importance for the maintenance of international peace and security and for the fulfilment of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

Reaffirming the inalienable right of states free to determine their own political, economic, cultural and social systems in accordance with the will of their peoples, without outside intervention, interference, subversion, coercion or threat in any form whatsoever,

Mindful of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations as well as the resolutions adopted by the United Nations on the principle of non-interference and non-intervention, in particular the declaration on principles of international law concerning friendly relations and co-operation among states in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations of 24 October, 1970, as well as the declaration on the inadmissibility of intervention and interference in the internal affairs of states, of 9 December 1981,

Have agreed as follows:

Article I

Relations between the high contracting parties shall be conducted in strict compliance with the principle of non-interference and non-intervention by states in the affairs of other states.

Article II

For the purpose of implementing the principle of non-interference and non-intervention each high

contracting party undertake to comply with the following obligations:

(1) To respect the sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity, national unity, security and non-alignment of the other high contracting party, as well as the national identity and cultural heritage of its people;

(2) To respect the sovereign and inalienable right of the other high contracting party freely to determine its own political, economic, cultural and social systems, to develop its international relations and to exercise permanent sovereignty over its natural resources, in accordance with the will of its people, and without outside intervention, interference, subversion, coercion or threat in any form whatsoever;

(3) To refrain from the threat or use of force in any form whatsoever so as not to violate the boundaries of each other, to disrupt the political, social or economic order of the other high contracting party, to overthrow or change the political system of the other high contracting party or its government, or to cause tension between the high contracting parties;

(4) To ensure that its territory is not used in any manner which would violate the sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity and national unity or disrupt the political, economic and social stability of the other high contracting party;

(5) To refrain from armed intervention, subversion, military occupation or any other form of intervention and interference, overt or covert, directed at the other high contracting party, or any act of military, political or economic interference in the internal affairs of the other high contracting party, including acts of reprisal involving the use of force;

(6) To refrain from any action or attempt in whatever form or under whatever pretext to destabilise or to undermine the stability of the other high contracting party or any of its institutions;

(7) To refrain from the promotion, encouragement or support, direct or indirect, of rebellious or secessionist activities against the other high contracting party, under any pretext whatsoever, or from any other action which seeks to disrupt the unity or to undermine or subvert the political order of the other high contracting party;

(8) To prevent within its territory the training, equipping, financing and recruitment of mercenaries from whatever origin for the purpose of hostile activities against the other high contracting party, or the sending of such mercenaries into the territory of the other high contracting party and accordingly to deny facilities, including financing for the training, equipping and transit of such mercenaries;

(9) To refrain from making any agreements or arrangements with other states designed to intervene or interfere in the internal and external affairs of the other high contracting party;

(10) To abstain from any defamatory campaign, vilification or hostile propaganda for the purpose of intervening or interfering in the affairs of the other high contracting party;

(11) To prevent any assistance to or use of or tolerance of terrorist groups, saboteurs or subversive agents against the other high contracting party;

(12) To prevent within its territory the presence, harbouring, in camps and bases or otherwise, organising, training, financing, equipping and arming of individuals and political, ethnic and any other groups for the purpose of creating subversion, disorder or unrest in the territory of the other high contracting party and accordingly also to prevent the use of mass media and the transportation of arms, ammunition and equipment by such individuals and groups;

(13) Not to resort to or to allow any other action that could be considered as interference or intervention;

Article III

The present agreement shall enter into force on 15 May 1988;

Article IV

Any steps that may be required in order to enable the high contracting parties to comply with the provisions of Article II of this agreement shall be completed by the date on which this agreement enters into force;

Article V

This agreement is drawn up in the English, Pashtu and Urdu languages, all texts being equally authentic. In case of any divergence of interpretation, the English text shall prevail.

Done in five original copies at Geneva this fourteenth day of April 1988.

(Signed by Afghanistan and Pakistan)

DECLARATION ON INTERNATIONAL GUARANTEES

Follows the full text of the declaration on international guarantees:

The government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and of the United States of America,

Expressing support that the Republic of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan have concluded a negotiated political settlement designed to normalise relations and promote good-neighbourliness between the two countries as well as to strengthen international peace and security in the region;

Wishing in turn to contribute to the achievement of the objectives that the Republic of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan have set themselves, and with a view to ensuring respect for their sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and non-alignment;

Undertake to invariably refrain from any form of interference and intervention in the internal affairs of the Republic of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and to respect the commitments contained in the bilateral agreement between the Republic of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on the principles of mutual relations, in particular on non-interference and non-intervention;

Urge all states to act likewise.

The present declaration shall enter into force on 15 May 1988.

Done at Geneva, this fourteenth day of April 1988 in five original copies, each in the English and Russian languages, both texts being equally authentic.

(Signed by the USSR and the USA)

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV

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Geneva: Memorandum of understanding

ANNEX

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

I. Basic requirements

(A) the parties will provide full support and co-operation to the representative of the Secretary-General and to all the personnel assigned to assist him;

(B) the representative of the Secretary-General and his personnel will be accorded every facility as well as prompt and effective assistance, including freedom of movement and communications, accommodation, transportation and other facilities that may be necessary for the performance of their tasks. Afghanistan and Pakistan undertake to grant to the representative and his staff all the relevant privileges and immunities provided for by the convention on the privileges and immunities of the United Nations.

(C) Afghanistan and Pakistan will be responsible for the safety of the representative of the Secretary-General and his personnel while operating in their respective countries.

(D) in performing their functions, the representative of the Secretary-General and his staff will act with complete impartiality. The representative of the Secretary-General and his personnel must not interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and Pakistan and, in this context, cannot be used to secure advantages for any of the parties concerned.

II. Mandate

The mandate for the implementation-assistance arrangements envisaged in paragraph 7 derives from the instruments comprising the settlement. All the staff assigned to the representative of the Secretary-General will accordingly be carefully briefed on the relevant provisions of the instruments and on the procedures that will be used to ascertain violations thereof.

III. Modus operandi and personnel organisation

The Secretary-General will appoint a senior military officer as deputy to the representative, who will be stationed in the area, as head of two small headquarters units, one in Kabul and the other in Islamabad, each comprising five military officers, drawn from existing United Nations operations, and a small civilian auxiliary staff.

The deputy to the representative of the

Secretary-General will act on behalf of the representative and be in contact with the parties through the liaison officer each party will designate for this purpose.

The two headquarters units will be organised into two inspection teams to ascertain on the ground any violation of the instruments comprising the settlement. Whenever considered necessary by the representative of the Secretary-General or his deputy, up to 40 additional military officers (some 10 additional inspection teams) will be redeployed from existing operations within the shortest possible time (normally around 48 hours).

The nationalities of all the officers will be determined in consultation with the parties.

Whenever necessary the representative of the Secretary-General, who will periodically visit the area for consultations with the parties and to review the work of his personnel, will also assign to the area members of his own office and other civilian personnel from the United Nations secretariat as may be needed. His deputy will alternate between the two headquarters units and will remain at all times in close communication with him.

IV. Procedure

(A) *Inspections conducted at the request of the parties*

(I) a complaint regarding a violation of the instruments of the settlement lodged by any of the parties should be submitted in writing, in the English language, to the respective headquarters units and should indicate all relevant information and details.

(II) upon receipt of a complaint the deputy to the representative of the Secretary-General will immediately inform the other party of the complaint and undertake an investigation by making on-site inspections, gathering testimony and using any other procedure which he may deem necessary for the investigation of the alleged violation. Such inspection will be conducted using headquarters staff as referred to above, unless the deputy representative of the Secretary-General considers that additional teams are needed. In that case, the parties will, under the principle of freedom of movement, allow immediate access of the additional personnel to their respective territories.

(III) reports on investigations will be prepared in English and submitted by the deputy representative of the Secretary-General to the two governments, on a confidential basis. (A third copy of the report will be simultaneously transmitted, on a confidential basis, to United Nations headquarters in New York, exclusively for the information of the Secretary-General and his represen-

tative). In accordance with paragraph 7 a report on an investigation should be considered in a meeting of the parties not later than 48 hours after it has been submitted. The deputy representative of the Secretary-General will, in the absence of the representative, lend his good offices to the parties and in that context he will assist in the organisation of the meetings and participate in them. In the context of those meetings the deputy representative of the Secretary-General may submit to the parties for their consideration and approval suggestions and recommendations for the prompt, faithful and complete observance of the provisions of the instruments. (Such suggestions and recommendations will be, as a matter of course, consulted with, and cleared by, the representative of the Secretary-General).

(B) *Inspections conducted on the initiative of the deputy representative of the Secretary-General*

In addition to inspections requested by the parties, the deputy representative of the Secretary-General may carry out on his own initiative and in consultation with the representative inspections he deems appropriate for the purpose of the implementation of paragraph 7. If it is considered that the conclusions reached in an inspection justify a report to the parties, the same procedure used in submitting reports in connection with inspections carried out at the request of the parties will be followed.

Level of participation in meetings

As indicated above, the deputy representative of the Secretary-General will participate at meetings of the parties convened for the purpose of considering reports on violations. Should the parties decide to meet for the purpose outlined in paragraph 7 at a high political level, the representative of the Secretary-General will personally attend such meetings.

V. Duration

The deputy to the representative of the Secretary-General and the other personnel will be established in the area not later than twenty days before the entry into force of the instruments. The arrangements will cease to exist two months after the completion of all timeframes envisaged for the implementation of the instruments.

VI. Financing

The cost of all facilities and services to be provided by the parties will be borne by the respective governments. The salaries and travel expenses of the personnel to and from the area, as well as the costs of the local personnel assigned to the headquarters units, will be defrayed by the United Nations.

Statement by Afghan President

"THE day has come to which the much-suffering people of Afghanistan have looked forward," says a statement by President Najibullah of the Republic of Afghanistan. "I have just received a message to the effect that in Geneva representatives of Afghanistan and Pakistan have signed agreements that bring peace to our land tormented by the war. They are putting an end to the undeclared war against Afghanistan, are opening the way home to refugees and creating possibilities for the return home of a limited contingent of Soviet troops. The Soviet Union and the United States have pledged to guarantee the fulfilment of the agreements.

"A new page has been opened in the history of our nation. April 14 will go down in our history as one of the happiest and most joyful feasts which the people will call the peace day.

"The road to it was difficult and complicated. However, we had a noble and great goal — peace for our nation, and we have done our utmost to attain it. The Geneva agreements are a victory of the national reconciliation policy, the result of efforts of many countries of the world community.

"The UN Secretary-General and his personal representative Diego Cordovez contributed a great deal to their success. The Afghan peoples express their heartfelt gratitude to them.

"We are grateful to the Government of Pakistan for political realism displayed by it and for its readiness for compromises which permitted the talks to be brought to a successful end.

"We appreciate the role played by the US

in the completion of a political settlement of the Afghanistan-related situation and express satisfaction over the US consent to be a co-guarantor of the Geneva agreements.

"We point out with special gratitude the role played by the Soviet Union in bringing back to normal the situation around Afghanistan. We shall never forget the selfless assistance of our friend and ally that it rendered to the Afghan people in the grimmest hour in the whole of their history. Understanding on the part of the Soviet Union and its support for our proposals and initiatives brought in the final end a long process of the Geneva talks to the present positive outcome.

"The Geneva agreements will enable our compatriots who are in exile to return home. Under the Geneva agreements no one will have the right to hinder the realisation of this legitimate intention.

(Continued on Page 141)

Geneva: Agreement on interrelationships

AGREEMENT ON INTER-RELATIONSHIPS

Follows the full text of the agreement on the inter-relationships for the settlement of the situation relating to Afghanistan:

1. The diplomatic process initiated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations with the support of all governments concerned and aimed at achieving, through negotiations, a political settlement of the situation relating to Afghanistan has been successfully brought to an end.

2. Having agreed to work towards a comprehensive settlement designed to resolve the various issues involved and to establish a framework for good-neighbourliness and co-operation, the government of the Republic of Afghanistan and the government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan entered into negotiations through the intermediary of the personal representative of the Secretary-General at Geneva from 16 to 24 June 1982. Following consultations held by the personal representative in Islamabad, Kabul and Teheran from 21 January to 7 February 1983, the negotiations continued at Geneva from 11 to 22 April and from 12 to 24 June 1983. The personal representative again visited the area for high level discussions from 3 to 15 April 1984. It was then agreed to change the format of the negotiations and, in pursuance thereof, proximity talks through the intermediary of the personal representative were held at Geneva from 24 to 30 August 1984. Another visit to the area by the personal representative from 25 to 31 May 1985 preceded further rounds of proximity talks held at Geneva from 20 to 25 June, from 27 to 30 August and from 16 to 19 December 1985. The personal representative paid an additional visit to the area from 8 to 18 March 1986 for consultations. The final round of negotiations began as proximity talks at Geneva on May 5 1986, was suspended on 23 May 1986, and was resumed from 31 July to 8 August 1986. The personal representative visited the area from 20 November to 3 December 1986 for further consultations and the talks at Geneva were resumed again from 25 February to 9 March 1987, and from 7 to 11 September 1987. The personal representative again visited the area from 18 January to 9 February 1988 and the talks resumed at Geneva from 2 March to 8 April 1988. The format of the negotiations was changed on 14 April 1988, when the instruments comprising the settlement were finalised, and, accordingly, direct talks were held at that stage. The government of the Islamic Republic of Iran was kept informed of the progress of the negotiations throughout the diplomatic process.

3. The government of the Republic of Afghanistan and the government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan took part in the negotiations with the expressed conviction that they were acting in accordance with their rights and obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and agreed that the political settlement should be based on the following principles of international law:

— The principle that states shall refrain in their

international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations;

— The principle that states shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security and justice are not endangered;

— The duty not to intervene in matters within the domestic jurisdiction of any state, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations;

— The duty of states to co-operate with one another in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations;

— The principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples;

— The principle of sovereign equality of states;

— The principle that states shall fulfil in good faith the obligations assumed by them in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

The two governments further affirmed the right of the Afghan refugees to return to their homeland in a voluntary and unimpeded manner.

4. The following instruments were concluded on this date as component parts of the political settlement:

A bilateral agreement between the Republic of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on the principles of mutual relations, in particular on non-interference and non-intervention;

A declaration on international guarantees by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America;

A bilateral agreement between the Republic of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on the voluntary return of refugees;

The present agreement on the interrelationships for the settlement of the situation relating to Afghanistan.

5. The bilateral agreement on the principles of mutual relations, in particular on non-interference and non-intervention, the declaration on international guarantees, the bilateral agreement on the voluntary return of refugees, and the present agreement on the inter-relationships for the settlement of the situation relating to Afghanistan will enter into force on 15 May 1988. In accordance with the timeframe agreed upon between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Republic of Afghanistan there will be a phased withdrawal of the foreign troops which will start on the date of entry into force mentioned above. One half of the troops will be withdrawn by 15 August 1988 and the withdrawal of all troops will be completed within nine months.

6. The inter-relationships in paragraph 5 above have been agreed upon in order to achieve effectively the purpose of the political settlement, namely that as from 15 May 1988: There will be no interference and intervention in any form in the affairs of the parties; the international guarantees will be in operation; the voluntary return of the refugees to their homeland will start and be completed within the timeframe specified in the agree-

ment on the voluntary return of the refugees; and the phased withdrawal of the foreign troops will start and be completed within the timeframe envisaged in paragraph 5. It is therefore essential that all the obligations deriving from the instruments concluded as component parts of the settlement be strictly fulfilled and that all the steps required to ensure full compliance with all the provisions of the instruments be completed in good faith.

7. To consider alleged violations and to work out prompt and mutually satisfactory solutions to questions that may arise in the implementation of the instruments comprising the settlement representatives of the Republic of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan shall meet whenever required.

A representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations shall lend his good offices to the parties and in that context he will assist in the organisation of the meetings and participate in them. He may submit to the parties for their consideration and approval suggestions and recommendations for prompt, faithful and complete observance of the provisions of the instruments.

In order to enable him to fulfil his tasks, the representative shall be assisted by such personnel under his authority as required. On his own initiative, or at the request of any of the parties, the personnel shall investigate any possible violations of any of the provisions of the instruments and prepare a report thereon. For that purpose, the representative and his personnel shall receive all the necessary co-operation from the parties, including all freedom of movement within their respective territories required for effective investigation. Any report submitted by the representative to the two governments shall be considered in a meeting of the parties no later than forty-eight hours after it has been submitted.

The modalities and logistical arrangements for the work of the representative and the personnel under his authority as agreed upon with the parties are set out in the Memorandum of Understanding which is annexed to and is part of this agreement.

8. The present instrument will be registered with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. It has been examined by the representatives of the parties to the bilateral agreements and of the states-guarantors, who have signified their consent with its provisions. The representatives of the parties, being duly authorised thereto by their respective governments, have affixed their signatures hereunder. The Secretary-General of the United Nations was present.

Done, at Geneva, this fourteenth day of April 1988, in five original copies each in the English, Pashtu, Russian and Urdu languages, all being equally authentic. In case of any dispute regarding the interpretation the English text shall prevail.

(Signed by Afghanistan and Pakistan)

In witness thereof, the representatives of the states-guarantors affixed their signatures hereunder:

(Signed by the USSR and USA)

(Continued from Page 140)

"A favourable opportunity is opening up before the countries of our region to turn it into a zone of peace and trust. We shall continue to work for the restoration of normal relations with our neighbours. We harbour the kindest feelings for the peoples of Iran and Pakistan. We want to maintain relations of friendship and co-operation with them and hope to meet equal understanding on their part.

"We are pinning our hopes on the development and deepening of multilateral contacts with friendly India, Socialist China and the Islamic world.

"Afghanistan has been the first to make a step of historic importance. The Geneva agree-

ments pave the way to peace and co-operation not only in our region but elsewhere. A political settlement of the Afghanistan-related situation can serve as a good example for the settlement of conflicts in other regions, and can become a model of a peaceful settlement of conflict situations. It will make a favourable impact on the world situation in general.

"Today we concentrate our thoughts and aspirations on the future, on Afghanistan's morrow. We see Afghanistan as a free, independent, neutral and non-aligned country maintaining friendly relations with all its neighbours and all the nations of the world. Such is the will of our people, which we shall put into effect resolutely and consistently.

"We urge all honest Afghan people, all true patriots to unite for the sake of attaining those great and noble goals. The problems of Afghanistan will be resolved by the Afghan people and them alone. We sincerely hope that our objectives, our hopes for the future will be met with understanding and support by peoples of the world".

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Geneva: Agreement on voluntary return of refugees

AGREEMENT ON VOLUNTARY RETURN OF REFUGEES

Follows the full text of the bilateral agreement between the Republic of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on the voluntary return of refugees:

The Republic of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan hereinafter referred to as the high contracting parties,

Desiring to normalise relations and promote good-neighbourliness and co-operation as well as to strengthen international peace and security in the region,

Convinced that voluntary and unimpeded repatriation constitutes the most appropriate solution for the problem of Afghan refugees present in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and having ascertained that the arrangements for the return of the Afghan refugees are satisfactory to them,

Have agreed as follows:

Article I

All Afghan refugees temporarily present in the territory of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan shall be given the opportunity to return voluntarily to their homeland in accordance with the arrangements and conditions set out in the present agreement.

Article II

The government of the Republic of Afghanistan shall take all necessary measures to ensure the following conditions for the voluntary return of Afghan refugees to their homeland:

(A) all refugees shall be allowed to return in freedom to their homeland;

(B) all returnees shall enjoy the free choice of domicile and freedom of movement within the Republic of Afghanistan;

(C) all returnees shall enjoy the right to work, to adequate living conditions and to share in the welfare of the state;

(D) all returnees shall enjoy the right to participate on an equal basis in the civic affairs of the Republic of Afghanistan. They shall be ensured equal benefits from the solution of the land question on the basis of the land and water reform;

(E) all returnees shall enjoy the same rights and privileges, including freedom of religion, and have the same obligations and responsibilities as any other citizens of the Republic of Afghanistan without discrimination.

The government of the Republic of Afghanistan undertakes to implement these measures and to provide, within its possibilities, all necessary assistance in the process of repatriation.

Article III

The government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan shall facilitate the voluntary, orderly and peaceful repatriation of all Afghan refugees staying within its territory and undertakes to provide, within its possibilities, all necessary assistance in the process of repatriation.

Article IV

For the purpose of organising, co-ordinating and supervising the operations which should effect the voluntary, orderly and peaceful repatriation of Afghan refugees, there shall be set up mixed commissions in accordance with the established international practice. For the performance of their functions the members of the commissions and their staff shall be accorded the necessary facilities, and have access to the relevant areas within the territories of the high contracting parties.

Article V

With a view to the orderly movement of the returnees, the commissions shall determine frontier crossing points and establish necessary transit centres. They shall also establish all other modalities for the phased return of refugees, including registration and communication to the country of return of the names of refugees who express the wish to return.

Article VI

At the request of the governments concerned, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees will co-operate and provide assistance in the process of voluntary repatriation of refugees in accordance with the present agreement. Special agreements may be concluded for this purpose between UNHCR and the high contracting parties.

Article VII

The present agreement shall enter into force on 15 May 1988. At that time the mixed commissions provided in Article IV shall be established and the operations for the voluntary return of refugees under this agreement shall commence.

The arrangements set out in Articles IV and V above shall remain in effect for a period of eighteen months. After that period the high contracting parties shall review the results of the repatriation and, if necessary, consider any further arrangements that may be called for.

Article VIII

This agreement is drawn up in the English, Pashtu, and Urdu languages, all texts being equally authentic. In case of any divergence of interpretation, the English text shall prevail.

Done in five original copies at Geneva this fourteenth day of April 1988.

(Signed by Afghanistan and Pakistan)

UN Secretary-General's remarks following the signing of the accords

Here follows the full text of UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar's remarks in Geneva following the signing of the accords on a political settlement of the situation relating to Afghanistan:

Excellencies,

The documents which have just been signed constitute a most significant achievement.

They represent a major step in the effort to bring peace to Afghanistan and a sure reprieve for its people. The challenge facing the people

of Afghanistan is great, but it can and must be met by them alone. The agreements lay the basis for the exercise by all Afghans of their right to self-determination, a principle enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

I am confident that the signatories of these agreements will abide fully by the letter and spirit of the texts and that they will implement them in good faith — for the sake of all the people of Afghanistan and for the wider objective of peace in the region and the world.

I have held a deep personal commitment to a peaceful solution of the situation relating to Afghanistan since the day, over seven years ago when, as personal representative of my predecessor, I participated in laying the groundwork for the agreement that has been signed today. I wish, at this stage, to express my warm appreciation to my personal representative, Mr Diego Cordovez for his skilful and patient endeavours as well as to the other members of the United Nations team.

The ceremony today is indeed a testimony to the capacity of the United Nations to attain positive results on the most complex of issues

when backed by the political will of its member states.

In closing, I wish to assure the people of Afghanistan that the United Nations and the international community stand ready to assist them in this critical moment of their history, in meeting the serious humanitarian and economic needs of their country. □

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AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON AFGHANISTAN

THE policy of national reconciliation has the broad support of the working people of Afghanistan, said the Prime Minister of the Republic of Afghanistan Sultan Ali Keshtmand. He was speaking in Kabul on April 19 at the opening of a conference of the Afghan, American and Soviet public held under the motto Peaceful Ways of Settlement of the Afghan Problem. "This policy gave a fresh impetus to the development of our multi-structure economy in which the private sector plays an important part", Sultan Ali Keshtmand said. "We have programmes for the country's development up to the year 2000. The Soviet Union renders large economic assistance to our country. At the same time, favourable terms are envisaged also for capital investments of other countries."

"Afghanistan now has mutually advantageous commercial relations with more than 50 countries, including the United States", the Prime Minister went on. "Deplorably, the US Administration denied Afghanistan the most favoured nation treatment in commerce. We know there are circles in the United States

which ignore the real developments in Afghanistan."

"They greatly influence the government's decision-making. For instance, a group of congressmen tried to bring pressure on the administration to prevent the signing of the Geneva agreements. Instead of supplying opposition units with armaments, it would be better to give humanitarian aid to refugees returning to Afghanistan."

"The signing of the Geneva agreements which assumed a form of international treaties creates a broad basis for all-round political solution of the Afghan problem," he said. The Geneva agreements preclude any interference in the internal affairs of both Pakistan and Afghanistan. This is guaranteed by the United States and the Soviet Union.

Soviet assistance

Addressing the US delegation, Sultan Ali Keshtmand said that if the bloodshed continues in Afghanistan as a result of the supply of armaments to the enemies of the Afghan revolution, the Afghan peoples will forever regard the USA as the mastermind of war and tension.

The head of the Afghan delegation, President of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Afghanistan Solyman Mohammad Laeq then took the floor. He said that in order to oppose military provocations, interference and

aggression, the Afghan side in the past turned to the Soviet Union for assistance. This assistance was of lawful nature and was necessary for safeguarding Afghanistan's independence, freedom and territorial integrity. The policy of national reconciliation has been conducted in Afghanistan since January 1987. It enjoys the nationwide support. More than 3,690 commissions for national reconciliation have been set up in the country. Four thousand and fifty-nine people from opposition groups work in these commissions. More than 120,000 refugees returned over this period from Pakistan, Iran, India, Arab countries, West European countries and the United States. More than 60,000 people from units of the opposition crossed over to the side of the government. Nineteen thousand convicts were released from prisons. Units of the limited contingent of Soviet troops were withdrawn from 13 provinces, and six regiments have returned to the Soviet Union.

Touching upon the Afghan-Pakistani talks in Geneva, Solyman Mohammad Laeq noted that the signing of the agreements alongside the policy of national reconciliation creates the opportunity for the settlement of the situation around Afghanistan, for an end to war and bloodshed, and for the establishment of peace on Afghan soil.

Noting the fruitful character of relations between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union, the head of the Afghan delegation stressed that these relations are an excellent example of relations of two countries and peoples that are at different stages of social development. □

Shevardnadze meets with Perez de Cuellar

THE Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze met with UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar in Geneva on April 14.

The role of the UN Secretary-General and of his personal envoy Diego Cordovez in bringing about a political settlement around Afghanistan received high appreciation from the Soviet side. The conclusion of the Geneva accords is far from being an event of local importance. It attests to the immense potential possibilities of the United Nations and will be a powerful stimulus for settling other regional conflicts, will help to find optimal solutions to crisis situations in other regions as well, including that in Central America.

The United Nations Secretary-General expressed his appreciation to Mikhail Gorbachev and the Soviet leadership for their contribution to the settlement of the Afghan problem, which, as Javier Perez de Cuellar stressed, would have been impossible without the statesmanship and political will that have been manifested.

From the moment of the signing of the accords it is the general obligation of all to vigorously and comprehensively contribute to their fullest and most honest observance; the United Nations Organisation is prepared to and is already adopting measures for the practical realisation of the Geneva Accords.

During the conversation the two also examined issues connected with the Iran-Iraq war, and the implementation of Security Council resolution 598. Javier Perez de Cuellar informed Eduard Shevardnadze about the outcome of his recent mission to Iran and Iraq, and pointed out certain positive changes in positions of the sides on the question of the search for possible ways to end the conflict.

Noting the similarity of views on a number of major aspects of the settlement of the conflict, the Soviet Foreign Minister presented in this connection concrete proposals of the Soviet leadership.

The participants in the conversation touched on the state of affairs in the Middle East and agreed to continue exchanges of opinion on this problem. □

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Geneva: Eduard Shevardnadze's press statement

Eduard Shevardnadze, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee and Foreign Minister of the USSR, made the following statement at a news conference in Geneva on April 14:

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Representatives of the Republic of Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America today affixed their signatures to agreements on a political settlement regarding Afghanistan.

The presence of the UN Secretary-General, Mr Perez de Cuellar, and his personal envoy, Mr Diego Cordovez, at the ceremony reflected not only their role in attaining the long-sought goal, but also the immense possibilities of the United Nations in settling regional and other conflicts.

But even given all their tireless and purposeful peace-making activities, today's results would have been impossible without the wisdom, goodwill and readiness for a sensible compromise in the supreme interest of peace and security, which has been demonstrated by the sides.

This result has been predetermined by my country's policy of solving acute international problems exceptionally by political means, which has been proclaimed by Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee.

The Afghan knot can be untied by dint of what is nowadays the most efficient tool, which we call new political thinking.

Two dates have, in our view, been of utterly exceptional significance in the calendar of the Geneva negotiations on Afghanistan. One was February 8, 1988, when Mikhail Gorbachev in Moscow and President Najibullah in Kabul issued statements that led the talks to the level of practical solutions. The other was April 7, 1988, when in Tashkent the leaders of the two friendly countries ushered in a new phase in the relationship of friendship and good-neighbourliness between the Soviet and Afghan peoples, which dates back to dozens of years ago.

The pivotal idea of the new phase is every kind of support for the success of the national reconciliation policy in every field essential to Afghanistan — be it aid with creating satisfactory conditions for the return of refugees or help with economic rehabilitation and socio-economic development in Afghanistan.

Speaking of the national reconciliation policy, which is by right associated with President Najibullah, we are convinced that it is this policy that has lent a strong impetus to the Geneva process. No outside actions can promise any worthy result if not backed up with adequate efforts inside the country. The President's course for national accord has definitely contributed to the success of the talks.

It has been facilitated, especially at the finishing stretch, by the compromise decisions of the sides, the realistic position of the Pakistani leaders and their readiness to take account of the opinions of the whole Afghan people. This approach, just as, of course, unfailing compliance by Pakistan with the signed agreements, will furnish a sound basis for improving Soviet-Pakistani relations.

The Soviet Union does justice to the United States consent to become a guarantor of the Geneva Accords together with it.

We hail the signature of the Geneva agreements because they put an end to outside interference in the affairs of Afghanistan and give

the Afghan people a possibility to achieve peace and accord in their land.

The sides — Afghanistan and Pakistan — today made legal commitments in treaty form, which exclude interference in any form in each other's affairs.

They pledged:

— Not to make their territories available for hostile actions against the other side.

— to refrain from any form of intervention, overt or covert, and from any act of military, political or economic interference.

— to refrain from assistance, encouragement or support for any insurgent or separatist activity.

— not to allow the training, outfitting, funding and recruitment of mercenaries of any origins in their territories.

— to refrain from concluding any agreements or accords with other states, which would be aimed at intervention or interference in the domestic or external affairs of the other side.

— not to allow any aid to, use of or tolerance to terrorist groups, saboteurs or wreckers acting against the other side.

Please pay attention to this: the entire spectrum of possible activities and actions to meddle in the affairs of Afghanistan has finally been all blocked.

This is precisely what has been needed for the Afghan people to be able to determine its destiny itself. Now it will get down to this and will be able to do away with the war and achieve peace in its land on the basis of national reconciliation and the unity of all the patriotic forces.

Another acutest problem, that of refugees, is being solved as well. They will have the possibility to return to their fatherland as equal citizens of Afghanistan. Assistance with repatriating refugees will be given by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. Mixed commissions to deal with issues connected with their return will also be formed.

In keeping with the agreements signed today, special UN personnel will investigate any violation of any commitment by the sides.

So a mechanism is being established also for verification, which adds to the conviction that the agreements will be observed.

Now that they have been signed and acquired the force of international legal instruments, the responsibility of the sides has grown dramatically. It is only irresponsible people that can ignore, reject or violate norms and principles of the settlement.

The Geneva agreements are a touchstone testing the sincerity of intentions with regard to Afghanistan. Those who really wish peace for the Afghan people and seek sincerely to help it heal its wounds will back these accords.

After my not so rare visits to Kabul and conversations with representatives of most diverse social currents in that country, I have become convinced that they can and want to get into the single mainstream of a revived, neutral and non-aligned Afghanistan. This goal, as we see it, is above all pretensions and ambitions and above ideological irreconcilability or claims to power.

A new count down began in Geneva today. It has begun not only for Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Geneva agreements have been unanimously supported by the Soviet people and

we have signed them with its mandate in hand.

But our contribution to the settlement has not been reduced to that. It is with these thoughts that we are returning home.

Eduard Shevardnadze then answered questions from journalists.

QUESTION: Some political figures in the West as well as the mass media assert that the signing of the Geneva Accords does not mean an end to the armed struggle in Afghanistan, and that the opposition will continue its struggle, getting as it does its weapons from the USA.

What is the rationale behind this propagandist campaign?

SHEVARDNADZE: I would answer your question as follows: those who are opposed to the Geneva Accords, to the implementation of the principles laid down in these documents, are in essence opposed to peace in the long-suffering Afghan land.

These people have their self-seeking interests.

This is one aspect of the matter.

The other is: I think it needs stressing that the accords signed today by the representatives of four states in the presence of the UN Secretary General and his personal envoy, create all the necessary conditions for the final political settlement of the Afghan problem. It goes without saying that this will be so only if the principles which are proclaimed by these accords will be honestly complied with. And we hope that the accords will be observed for they provide for the creation of a single and coherent system of control through the UN framework.

QUESTION: I recollect that you said this at the press conference in Washington: if the USA insists on the continuation of arms shipments to its "friends", then it cannot be a guarantor in the implementation of the accords that are to be signed. You have also stated that the Soviet Union insists on its right to continue deliveries of arms to the lawful Government of Afghanistan in accordance with the existing treaty.

How was this incongruity between the then and the present positions of the two sides resolved?

SHEVARDNADZE: I would ask you to read very attentively the documents signed today. They do not refer specifically to the deliveries of arms.

Both before and today we hold the same position: co-operation between the Soviet Union and Afghanistan is pursued on a legal basis, for it rests on a corresponding contractual and legal basis. The United States of America has no such contractual base. There is no legal foundation for the shipments of arms to the formations and groupings waging an armed struggle against the lawful Government of Afghanistan.

In spite of all this we have still decided to sign the Geneva Accords, because if the parties — I have in mind Afghanistan and Pakistan — honestly abide by their commitments, then the political settlement and the restoration of peace in Afghanistan will become a realistic thing.

I will tell you frankly: the arms shipments by the USA to groupings waging a struggle against the lawful Afghan Government will not have a decisive influence — on condition, naturally, that Afghanistan and Pakistan observe

all the principles laid down in the Geneva Accords.

QUESTION: Can one expect that following the signing of the accords the Soviet Union will support Shultz's plan for the Middle East? Are there chances for joint Soviet-American actions and efforts in the Middle Eastern direction?

SHEVARDNADZE: These are different questions. But I agree with you in that the signing of the Geneva Accords stimulates the positive processes in terms of settlement of regional conflicts, including the problem of the Middle East. Here the United States of America, the Arab states, the Palestine Liberation Organisation and other countries are working very actively. I don't think it will be an exaggeration to say that not bad prospects are now opening for the settlement of the Middle East problem — the most intractable and painful problem among all the regional problems. This potential has to be utilised.

In a certain while there will be a meeting with the US Secretary of State in our country, with whom we shall discuss some topical issues, including also the questions of a Middle East settlement.

QUESTION: Have you any plans for the near future to visit countries of the Middle East?

SHEVARDNADZE: I have my secrets. I don't want to divulge them. However, if this may be helpful, I am ready to.

QUESTION: How are the generals of the Soviet Army reacting to the fact that for the first time in history they have lost a war?

SHEVARDNADZE: I think that your question is not in the spirit of the Geneva Accords at all. The Soviet generals do not think that they have lost the war. The question has never been put that way.

I have already said that at present, conditions and all the indispensable legal foundations have been created for an end to the interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. Correspondingly, conditions have also been created for the withdrawal of Soviet troops. There is no defeat here.

QUESTION: Is not the Soviet Union worried about the situation in Central America? Are you going to raise this issue in your conversation with State Secretary Shultz?

SHEVARDNADZE: During our every meeting we raise the question of Central America. We raise it at all levels: at the level of the leaders of our nations, and at the level of ministers, and at the level of experts. The question of Central America is always at the centre of our attention.

We welcome the positive tendency that has sprung up here lately, and hope that decisions will be taken on Central America as well, which will ensure the necessary conditions for a peaceful development of Nicaragua and of other countries.

QUESTION: What lessons will the Soviet leadership draw from the Afghan experience and how will these lessons influence Soviet foreign policy?

SHEVARDNADZE: In principle I have answered your question in my statement.

The Geneva Accords, the documents signed today — these are the results of the new political thinking.

Each people must decide its own destiny itself. The Afghan people also has this right. We have helped it in difficult times. Now, when real guarantees of non-interference have appeared, the Soviet troops are to leave Afghanistan.

QUESTION: If all the parties abide by the agreement on Afghanistan, if nobody tries to get into Afghanistan, then, still, what is to be done about the five million refugees who wish to return to Afghanistan? My question is this: when will the present government of Afghanistan allow the United Nations Organisation to send its representatives there? When will it permit representatives of the mass media to go into Afghanistan in order to see for themselves the state of affairs on the spot? When will this happen — tomorrow, on May 15 or whenever?

SHEVARDNADZE: I would ask you once again to study attentively the documents signed today. In them you will find the answer to your question. They provide for all the necessary conditions for an unobstructed return of the refugees to their homeland. As regards the visiting of Afghanistan by representatives of the United Nations Organisation, of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees and of other agencies, the Afghan Government has never erected any obstacles in their way. Neither is it erecting them now when — I stress — totally new, favourable conditions have arisen for the return of the refugees — under the supervision of the United Nations Organisation.

QUESTION: Has the USA undertaken a commitment to discontinue arms shipments to the Afghan mujaheddins? And the second question: what role has the concept of the so-called positive symmetry played in fostering a positive mutual understanding?

SHEVARDNADZE: I have already said that the question of arms supplies is not mentioned in the Geneva documents. Neither do they say anything about the so-called symmetry in arms shipments.

QUESTION: What would be the reaction of the Soviet Union if the Americans said that, should the need arise, they are going to continue the supplies of arms to the mujaheddins? If the United States began to airlift arms directly to the Afghan rebels?

SHEVARDNADZE: I told the Secretary of State honestly and openly that the USA has no legal foundations for supplying arms to the forces waging a struggle against a lawful government.

Of course, if they will supply them with arms, this will complicate the matter of political settlement.

QUESTION: Can I ask you a geographical question? Does the withdrawal of the Soviet troops also extend to the Wahan Valley which links Afghanistan with China?

SHEVARDNADZE: It covers the entire territory of Afghanistan.

QUESTION: You spoke of the new thinking. Today one can read even in the Soviet press statements to the effect that the introduction of Soviet troops into Afghanistan was a mistake. Among other things, one such statement has been made by a prominent Soviet academician. What does the new Soviet leadership think about this?

SHEVARDNADZE: I do not know what academician has expressed such an assessment. I do not think he said so. The Soviet troops came to Afghanistan at the request of the lawful government of Afghanistan in the difficult days for that country, relying on a corresponding juridical and legal basis.

QUESTION: The day before yesterday a group of Italian parliamentarians meeting in Moscow with your First Deputy Mr Vorontsov, was told that 50,000 Soviet soldiers and officers should be withdrawn from Afghanistan during the first five months following the entry of the accords into force. Can you confirm this figure? Does it square with the agreement to the effect that 50 per cent of soldiers and officers will be withdrawn during the first three months?

SHEVARDNADZE: I am returning to Moscow today and there I will clarify precisely whether the First Deputy Foreign Minister of the USSR put it that way. I repeat, however, what is widely known: we have committed ourselves to withdrawing half of our troops from Afghanistan during the first three months from the day of the start of the withdrawal, viz. from May 15, 1988. How much that would be — whether 50,000 or 42,000 — this will become known in the process of the withdrawal.

Thank you all for your attention. The best of everything to you. □

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV'S SPEECH AT RECEPTION FOR ASTEC OFFICIALS

(continued from page 138)

I believe the main thing is that uncertainty as to what will happen tomorrow increased over this short period of time. It is not certain whether an avalanche of protectionist measures will not engulf world trade and whether an upheaval in one large Western country will not set off a chain reaction with unprecedented consequences.

I know that all these matters are discussed in the West at meetings of "Sevens", "Nines", at conferences of economic ministers, bankers and so on. But don't you think that the circle of people and countries that discuss problems of the world economy and its future is narrowed to such an extent that quite objective approaches and equitable solutions cannot be found in it?

Indeed the world market, too, has narrowed to the market of industrialised capitalist countries of America, Western Europe, Japan and those directly involved with them. Isn't it time to ponder in earnest the forming of a real modern world market?

We are prepared to take a fresh look at

all these realities, prepared for co-operation. For this is one of the global problems which can only be resolved by joint efforts.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are formulating our policy, also our foreign economic policy, to last for a long time. We make it more predictable for the outside world. And we do this not in order to please someone. We do this for the reason that we need this ourselves and that this is profitable for us. We are striving to take into consideration the international experience of business ties.

Perestroika in the Soviet Union and the foreign policy based on new thinking are not just a long-term programme of the development of our society oriented at the twenty-first century.

They are an objective reality which starts gaining inertial dynamics of its own, if you please.

And the last thing: with all the importance of business considerations, all of us are citizens of our own countries and representatives of mankind. And we all should be concerned with the quest for the ways for mankind's survival,

for a more tranquil and normal life.

Therefore we are constantly faced with the question: what can each one of us do for the shaping of stable, mutually-advantageous demilitarised relations between the USSR and the USA not for the sake of others, but for the sake of ourselves, for the sake of our children and grandchildren?

And answering this question, let us get down to business. In the beginning was the word. But if the word were not followed by deeds, there would be neither human history nor civilisation.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish you success in your personal pursuits and business undertakings. □

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Soviet and Swedish foreign ministers sign agreement

EDUARD SHEVARDNADZE and Sten Andersson, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, on April 18 signed Soviet-Swedish agreements on the division of the continental shelf, as well as the Soviet economic zone and the Swedish fishing zone in the Baltic Sea, and on their relations in the sphere of fishing in a disputed area of the Baltic Sea. They also signed a protocol to those documents. The ministers expressed satisfaction with the fact that the issue which had aggravated bilateral relations between the USSR and Sweden for almost 20 years had been removed from the agenda.

It was pointed out in this connection that the signing of the Soviet-Swedish documents was a vivid example of how solutions could be found to the most complicated problems.

After the signing of the agreements Shevardnadze and Andersson had a conversation which was held in a businesslike and constructive atmosphere, in conditions of openness and benevolence.

Both sides expressed satisfaction with the present-day state of Soviet-Swedish relations and pointed out that an official visit to Sweden by Nikolai Ryzhkov, Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, last January had given a new impetus to further progress in the development of co-operation between the USSR and Sweden in various spheres.

The ministers went on record in favour of the expansion of mutually advantageous trade and economic relations. Shevardnadze pointed out the good prospects opening up in this sphere in connection with the implementation of the mechanism of foreign economic relations.

Disarmament process

Discussing the world situation, the ministers drew attention to the historic significance of the Soviet-American treaty on the elimination of medium- and shorter-range missiles that paved the way to real nuclear disarmament which should be made irreversible and continuous. The next item on the agenda is the problem of the reduction by half of the strategic nuclear arsenals of the USSR and the US in conditions of the observance of the ABM Treaty in the form in which it was signed in 1972. Disarmament priorities include as well the concluding of a convention on a total chemical weapons ban, the reduction of conventional armaments and armed forces in Europe.

Eduard Shevardnadze pointed out the important role played by Sweden, including within the framework of the "group of six", in the improvement of the world political climate and the activation of the disarmament process.

Shevardnadze and Andersson exchanged views on questions connected with the initiatives put forward by Mikhail Gorbachev in Murmansk which are aimed at bringing down military confrontation and developing all-round

co-operation of northern countries. Shevardnadze expressed confidence that Sweden's contribution to a practical implementation of those proposals would be in line with the interests both of the Soviet and Swedish nations and would promote the consolidation of security and trust in the north European region as a whole.

The sides expressed satisfaction over the signing in Geneva of a package of agreements on a political settlement of the Afghanistan-related situation which is a breakthrough in the solution of regional conflicts in the spirit of new thinking, by peaceful means and which is of historic significance, on a par with the INF Treaty. Shevardnadze said that the assistance of other countries in the establishment of peace and national reconciliation, as well as respect for the Geneva agreements would serve as a good example for the improvement of the situation in other hotbeds of tension in the world. The sides emphasised the similarity of views of the USSR and Sweden with regard to ways of the settlement of the Middle East crisis.

In conclusion Shevardnadze reaffirmed an invitation to Andersson to pay an official visit to the Soviet Union which was accepted with gratitude. The date of the visit will be coordinated additionally through diplomatic channels.

On the same day Andersson had a conversation at the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs with Yuli Vorontsov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR. □

Soviet-Czechoslovak communique

THE conclusion of a treaty between the USSR and the USA on halving their strategic offensive weapons along with strict observance of the ABM Treaty, as signed in 1972, and non-withdrawal from it for a specified period of time is the primary task in the field of international relations. This agreement would constitute a major breakthrough to a nuclear-free world. This is said in a Soviet-Czechoslovak Communiqué on the results of the official friendly visit to the USSR of Gustav Husak, Member of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the

Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and President of Czechoslovakia. He was staying in the USSR at the invitation of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet on April 11-14.

Andrei Gromyko, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee and President of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, held talks with Gustav Husak.

Both sides condemned NATO's plans of "compensation" for the nuclear weapons, due to be eliminated under the INF Treaty, as a serious danger to the current prospect of reducing military confrontation in Europe. They pointed to the inadmissibility of allowing disarmament in one direction to be accompanied by the arms race in another.

Andrei Gromyko voiced full support for Czechoslovakia's complex initiative on creating a zone of trust, co-operation and good neighbourly relations along the line of contact between Warsaw Treaty and NATO member countries. The realisation of this proposal would help improve the general political climate on the continent and develop the European process.

During the discussion of the situation in other regions of the world, the sides expressed serious concern over the escalation of Iranian-Iraqi war, the situation in the Middle East, Central America and southern Africa and reaffirmed their firm resolve actively to promote the earliest political settlement of the existing hotbeds of tension and conflicts in the world. □

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Soviet-British joint venture

AN agreement on the creation of a joint Soviet-British engineering-trading firm Asetco has been signed at the Moscow Centre of International Trade.

Its founders from the Soviet side are the production amalgamations Stavropolpolimer from the city of Budyonovsk, the Northern Caucasus, and Organichesky Sintez from Kazan, the Tatar Autonomous Republic, as well as the Moscow State Institute for the Designing of Factories Producing Plastics and Semi-fabricates. The founders from the British side are the firm John Brown, the Morgan Grenfell Bank and the Moscow Narodny Bank. Under the agreement, the headquarters of the firm will be situated in Jersey, the Channel Isles.

Asetco will develop production processes for

increasing the capacities in Budyonovsk for the manufacture of ethylene from 250,000 to 350,000 tons a year and of polyethylene from 200,000 to 300,000 tons and in Kazan — from 200,000 to 400,000 tons a year.

The modernisation and retooling of those factories will allow for the reduction of consumption of raw materials and energy and will ensure the production of new types of polyethylene. About half of the increment of polyethylene will be exported through the joint firm.

Asetco will take upon itself all the expenditures for the redesigning of the ethylene and polyethylene producing installations which will be recovered by export deliveries of polyethylene. □

Nikolai Ryzhkov's speech in Budapest

ON April 18 Nikolai Ryzhkov, Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, spoke at an official dinner given in his honour at the Hungarian Parliament in Budapest.

The head of the Soviet Government emphasised that the community of the vital interests of the USSR and Hungary "has enabled them to pool closely their efforts in a principal area — in building a new life and establishing peace in Europe and all over the world."

These contacts were distinguished by substance, business-like, creative and frank character, he observed.

"This very spirit characterises meetings between Mikhail Gorbachev and Janos Kadar. They orient our countries at the concerted search for answers to the challenge of the times, to new problems of renewal that have not as yet been resolved by socialist practice."

Ryzhkov dwelt on questions of perestroika, or restructuring, in the USSR, noting that "the theoretical and political platform of perestroika, worked out by the Party, is being actively translated into real deeds."

A turn towards the rapid development of the material base of the entire social sphere had been started. Most urgent problems — housing, food and supply of goods and services — were being resolved. He pointed out that the Soviet people highly valued the Hungarian public's support for the perestroika drive in the Soviet Union.

Speaking of the development of ties between the USSR and Hungary, Ryzhkov said that life itself prompted the need for enrichment with new forms — more effective and reliable — of all-round co-operation between the two countries that would be based on "genuine comradesly equality."

Nikolai Ryzhkov considered the issue of perfecting the activity of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. "Ways of restructuring the mechanism of co-operation and socialist economic integration and the activity of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance were outlined at the latest session of the CMEA. Our task is to fulfil the decisions adopted there by concerted effort," he pointed out.

Analysing the present state of international relations, Ryzhkov described as legitimate the

fact that the USSR and Hungary along with other countries of the socialist community were initiators of things new in international life and were shaping a comprehensive system of international peace and security.

"Collective reason and efforts of the international community are required to break the vicious circle of confrontation and the arms race, to break the stereotypes of prejudice and hostility and to build relations in a civilised way, giving top priority to universal human values and international law," he said.

"Both in our domestic and foreign policy, we are a Party of humanism, law and order and democracy."

"We suggest that all states — big, medium and small — take part on an equal basis in transforming international relations in keeping with the ideas and principles of the United Nations," Ryzhkov said.

"We counterpose an honest and evident idea of mutual respect and balance of interests to the concepts of nuclear and other kinds of military deterrence. We call for greater openness in international affairs.

"This is the essence of the comprehensive system of security that would be all-embracing. It should be established in all spheres: disarmament, regional conflicts, world economic ties, preservation of the environment, protection of human rights and development of humanitarian co-operation."

The head of the Soviet Government observed that the treaty on the elimination of intermediate- and shorter-range missiles embodied the potential of new political thinking. "We favour the conclusion at the forthcoming Soviet-American summit in Moscow of an agreement on a 50 per cent reduction of strategic offensive weapons on condition the ABM Treaty is observed in the form it was signed in 1972 and the sides keep within it for an agreed upon period."

The Soviet Union, Ryzhkov said, regarded with understanding Hungary's initiatives on developing positive processes around the world and especially in Europe. "The common European home," he observed, "can and should be built only through concerted efforts by all on the basis of their social choice."

Ryzhkov emphasised that at the Vienna meeting "the Soviet delegation has been

instructed, in closely co-operating with delegations from all the socialist and other countries, to strive towards filling up all the three Helsinki baskets with weighty contents, deepening and promoting the all-European dialogue and facilitating its constructive completion."

"We are deeply convinced that European security should be sought not on the road of rearmament, but in the opposite direction — through bringing the military potentials down to the lowest possible level corresponding to requirements of sufficiency and non-offensive defence, elimination of asymmetries by reducing the weapons of those who are ahead."

He pointed out that it was time to turn to resultative talks on the realistic reduction of the arms and armed forces from the Atlantic to the Urals. These objectives could be soon facilitated thanks to an exchange of information on the armed forces and conventional armaments of the member countries of the two alliances on the whole and in each of the countries and regions in Europe.

Ryzhkov said that the principled stance of the Warsaw Treaty countries, as it was reaffirmed at the Sofia meeting of the Foreign Ministers' Committee, was very clear: "to overcome the division of Europe into confronting military blocs and, as a first step, to dismantle their military organisations.

"Moreover, as the Soviet side already stated, we would like to see the elimination of all military bases in foreign territories and the return of troops home."

He assessed the Geneva agreements on Afghanistan as a vivid example of the policy of new thinking. He confirmed that the Soviet Union would start the withdrawal of its troops from Afghanistan on May 15 and recalled that the friendly attitude to that country and respect for its sovereignty had been the Soviet Union's principled line since the time of Lenin.

Nikolai Ryzhkov expressed the view that international relations would be undoubtedly improved by the earliest settlement of the Middle East conflict on the basis of the balance of interests of all states and peoples of that region through the mechanism of an international conference.

He called for the adoption of vigorous international efforts in keeping with UN decisions to put an end to the continued war between Iran and Iraq. □

USSR Supreme Soviet delegation in Strasbourg

A USSR Supreme Soviet delegation, on an official visit to Strasbourg at the invitation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, on April 19 met with the leadership of the assembly and its standing commissions.

They exchanged information on the structure and activity of the USSR Supreme Soviet and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the possibilities of establishing stable ties and co-operation between them within the framework of the all-European process on issues of security, economy, ecology, health services, culture, humanitarian exchanges and protection of human rights.

The conversation confirmed the Western European parliamentarians' interest in the concept of the common European home advanced by General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee Mikhail Gorbachev.

Both sides expressed readiness for constant

dialogue and the concerted search for spheres of co-operation on questions related to peoples of the entire continent.

The leaders of the Parliamentary Assembly displayed vivid interest in the process of restructuring and democratisation in the Soviet Union and the overhauling of the legislative system and stressed the value of the USSR's experience in many spheres of social, economic and political life.

The delegations expressed the common view that it was important to pool efforts to preserve peace in Europe which had seen cruel confrontation and bloodshed in the past.

Representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly expressed their readiness to develop contacts with the USSR Supreme Soviet and the inter-parliamentary dialogue to deepen mutual understanding in order to "avoid repeating mistakes and war tragedies of the past", as the Parliamentary Assembly President Louis Jung pointed out.

The delegation was received by the Secretary-

General of the Council of Europe, Marcelino Oreja Aguirre. An exchange of views was held on possibilities of developing contacts between the USSR Supreme Soviet and the Council of Europe.

The Soviet delegation was received at the Municipal Council by the Strasbourg Mayor, Senator Marcel Rudloff. During a warm conversation they discussed prospects of establishing direct co-operation with Soviet cities.

The conversations and meetings were attended by the USSR Ambassador to France, Yakov Ryabov. □

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Meeting of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee

AT ITS meeting on April 14 the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee endorsed the Central Committee's May Day slogans.

The Political Bureau discussed Mikhail Gorbachev's report of his trip to Uzbekistan. Central economic departments and ministries and the Central Trade Union Council were recommended to analyse issues raised by workers, Party and economic executives during the meetings and conversations in the Soviet Asian republic.

Special attention was given to the need for improving the use of the economic potential and boosting the republic's social and economic development on this basis. Corresponding proposals are to be submitted for consideration to the CPSU Central Committee.

The Political Bureau examined and approved proposals on the organisation and structure of management of the national education system. The newly established union-republican state committee of the USSR for people's education is assigned the task of elaborating the strategy, forecasting and conducting long-term planning in the field of study and education.

The Political Bureau heard an account of Gorbachev's meeting with Afghan President Najibullah in Tashkent on April 7 and the results of Eduard Shevardnadze's talks with the Afghan leaders during his working visit to Kabul on April 3-6.

Satisfaction was expressed with the development of Soviet-Afghan co-operation and interaction, including resolving external aspects of the Afghan problem. This brought about the conclusion of the Geneva diplomatic process and the signing of the documents on the political settlement of the situation relating to Afghanistan.

The Soviet-Afghan summit, which produced a joint statement, reaffirmed the two sides' resolve to continue work towards achieving a comprehensive Afghan settlement.

In the light of the agreements reached in Geneva, of special significance now is the

solution of internal aspects of the Afghan problem. The approach to it was clearly set out in the statement which expressed firm and resolute support for the course towards national reconciliation in Afghanistan and creation of a government on a broad coalition basis provided that questions of the internal Afghan settlement are the prerogative of the Afghans themselves.

The Political Bureau examined and approved the results of Gorbachev's conversation and Andrei Gromyko's talks with Gustav Husak, Member of the Presidium of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia Central Committee and President of Czechoslovakia.

It pointed to the usefulness of the work carried out during the visit and importance of strengthening fraternal friendship and political alliance between the USSR and Czechoslovakia.

The Political Bureau approved the results of Gorbachev's conversation and Nikolai Ryzhkov's talks with Zbigniew Messner, Member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party and Chairman of Poland's Council of Ministers, who was in the USSR on a working visit.

The accords reached during the visit create good conditions for enhancing the efficiency of mutual ties on the basis of profound production and technological interaction and broad use of new progressive forms of economic co-operation.

The Political Bureau stressed the importance of invigorating efforts to implementing provisions of the Soviet-Polish declaration on co-operation in ideology, science and culture, signed in April 1987.

It was stressed that the forthcoming visit of Mikhail Gorbachev to Poland will have a particularly profound significance for the further strengthening of the fraternal friendship between the CPSU and the PUWP, for the peoples of both countries, and for the development and improvement of the whole complex of Soviet-Polish relations.

The meeting heard information about the meeting of Mikhail Gorbachev as well as about the conversations of Andrei Gromyko and Anatoli Dobrynin, with Willy Brandt, Chairman

of the Socialist International, Honorary Chairman of the Social Democratic Party of Germany. It was pointed out that the interaction of the CPSU and the Socialist International, of communists and social democrats and other left-wing and democratic forces of Europe can impart a constructive impulse to the discussion of, and the quest for, political ways to solve such problems as disarmament, development of a genuinely all-European co-operation, "North-South" relations and regional conflicts.

The Political Bureau approved the results of the conversation of Mikhail Gorbachev and of the talks of Eduard Shevardnadze and Anatoli Dobrynin, with Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the PLO Executive Committee, who has stayed in Moscow on a brief working visit, reaffirmed the correctness of the approach to solving the Arab-Israeli conflict on the basis of the new political thinking, the principle of balancing the interests of all parties and a search for constructive and mutually acceptable solutions of all the aspects of the conflict. Stating that more favourable prerequisites are now shaping up for the attainment of a comprehensive Middle East settlement, the Political Bureau pointed out the need for a further redoubling of efforts, including those within the UN framework, with a view to an early convening of an international conference on the Middle East.

The results of the participation of the Soviet Union's delegation led by Lev Zaikov, in the events held in Finland to mark the 40th anniversary of the Soviet-Finnish Treaty on Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance, have been discussed. It was stressed that the experience of Soviet-Finnish co-operation, accumulated during the 40 years of the operation of the treaty, constitutes a weighty contribution by our countries and peoples to the efforts of the international community to build a nuclear-free and non-violent world.

The meeting of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee also discussed other questions of the development of Soviet economy and of the strengthening of international co-operation. □

The Meeting in the Kremlin

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Margaret Thatcher receives Soviet delegation

BRITAIN'S Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher received deputies of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR Avgust Voss, Yevgeni Velikhov and Valentina Tereshkova, who are in Britain at the invitation of the Speaker of the House of Commons of the British Parliament. Leonid Zamyatin, Ambassador of the USSR to Britain, took part in the talk.

During the talk the sides set out their positions on several key issues of the international situation, evaluated positively Soviet-US contacts at summit level, and expressed the hope that the upcoming Moscow meeting will give a fresh impetus to the development of these contacts. The talk touched on the issues of European countries' involvement in this important process that creates conditions for lessening world tensions.

Thatcher spoke out in favour of expanding parliamentary contacts between the Soviet Union and Britain. She said that her meetings and constructive conversations with Mikhail Gorbachev provided an opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of the processes under way inside the Soviet Union. It was stressed that there was great interest in Britain in getting better knowledge about perestroika, democratisation and openness. □

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