

Mikhail Gorbachev on Soviet political and economic reforms

DISMANTLING the outdated economic management system based on power-and-pressure methods is the principal objective of the economic reform, Mikhail Gorbachev told workers at the Izhorsky Works on July 11, during his visit to Leningrad. A transcript of the conversation is published in the latest, 8th issue of the journal *News from the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee* (Herald of the CPSU Central Committee).

Addressing workers at one of the country's foremost heavy industrial centres, President Gorbachev noted that "the economy is the central, pivotal question now. The resolution of economic issues will enable us to act more confidently in other fields, and first of all, to cope efficiently with social issues."

Gorbachev pointed out that the groundwork must be laid in the next two years for attaining, within the following five-year period, a level that would allow to ensure normal supplies of foodstuffs to the nation.

Speaking about the development of agriculture, President Gorbachev noted that retooling and updating the processing industry was a high-priority concern. He told workers that a 7-year programme for the development of the food

industry had been worked out and that the defence industry branches would contribute to the implementation of the programme. "We have come to feel," Gorbachev said, "that very soon the situation with foodstuffs will be changing for the better."

The Soviet President drew the attention of workers to the need for political reform. "Without it, we shall not be able to hold on to the perestroika policy. Perestroika will succeed if, through democracy, through political reform, we really involve people in all the affairs of society and the state. This is the only way to make perestroika irreversible and to preclude anyone from cutting it short. And this will be ensured within the framework of democracy and glasnost."

The political reform, Gorbachev noted, must be taken to a higher level, to its new, second phase — a real transfer of power to the Soviets, local bodies of power.

Touching upon inter-ethnic relations, Mikhail Gorbachev pointed out that the resolution of inter-ethnic problems lies not in "dismantling what has been created, not in devaluating our federation, but in allowing a fuller realisation of its potential. We must fill with real substance the sovereignty of the union republics and the autonomy of national formations. We must act in a way that would help people of all nationalities, no matter where they reside, feel confident and

easy in their minds both at present and in future."

"This is a practical and humane way," Gorbachev stressed, "that is leading in harmonised interests of society and the nations populating our vast country. Those who seek to push people along another road are playing with fire. To divide, to split our community, to re-shape the federation itself is nothing but irresponsible activity."

The Soviet President supported proposals aimed at taking fuller account of the interests of work collectives and expanding their representation in bodies of power in a democratic way during the forthcoming elections to local soviets, or councils.

Mikhail Gorbachev replied to numerous questions concerning a wide range of problems relating to perestroika and invigorating the activity of Party organisations. "Should we permit a weakening of the Party or a downgrading of its progressive activity," Mikhail Gorbachev said, "we would deal a shattering blow to socialism. The Party, with its policy and organisational activity, is an exponent of the interests of the entire nation, a dependable tool for uniting and consolidating our society." He noted that, "as concerns political leadership nobody can replace the Party. I see the destiny of our Party in acquiring, through perestroika, a new strength, in winning and consolidating authority," Mikhail Gorbachev said. □

Nikolai Ryzhkov's interview with the weekly *Argumenti i Fakty*

NIKOLAI RYZHKOV, Chairman of Council of Ministers of the USSR, has qualified the current period of Soviet economy as a very complex transitional stage, when administrative methods interlaced with economic ones. "We are advancing towards a socialist market along a difficult road in very unfavourable conditions, when there is more money in the sphere of production and in the hands of the population than material resources and commodities, when it is necessary to reduce the budget deficit drastically first and foremost in order to restore equilibrium in the nation economy," he noted in an interview given to the weekly *Argumenti i Fakty*.

"We must proceed at such a pace as not to destabilise society and the economy. This is very dangerous. But if we stop, it will be tantamount

to going back to where we had started from."

The Soviet Prime Minister believes that an optimal number of ministries and government committees was established for the current period, though in the future it should be further reduced. Everything depends on how quickly new forms of economic management will develop. In Nikolai Ryzhkov's opinion, the present government is the "most intellectual in the past decade" and it is capable of carrying out the reform needed by the people.

"We are to prepare five most difficult legislations for the autumn session of the Supreme Soviet, including the laws on property, on rent and rental relationships, on a uniform system of taxation, on land and on the enterprise," Ryzhkov said. "I do not think that they are merely economic laws. They will also affect the political reform, that is the life of all our people. And foremost in this code of laws will be the law on property, not the enterprise. Five teams of experts and scientists are now working on these legislations and we must adopt them in one package, not separately," Ryzhkov continued. "Otherwise contradictions may arise. Altogether these laws will inevitably alter the superstructure. I am convinced of it. It is impossible to do away with ministries at one go, voluntarily, everything is much too interlinked."

Nikolia Ryzhkov concluded the interview by expressing the firm conviction that a turn from democratisation to dictatorship was impossible in the Soviet Union. "Even if somebody wished to do it, the people will never agree to it," he stressed. "I am sure of it." □

Electronic system for Soviet Parliament

AN electronic system is now being installed in the chambers of the USSR Supreme Soviet in the Kremlin to facilitate procedure. It will be put into operation in time for the parliament's second session scheduled to begin on September 25.

During the First Congress of People's Deputies and the first session of the country's Supreme Soviet, criticism was repeatedly heard of the considerable waste of time and confusion resulting from the use of outdated techniques to deal with such matters of procedure as taking and counting votes and arranging lists of speakers.

The electronic system, the newspaper *Izvestia* says, is endowed with a capacity much superior to that of a mere counting machine. It can perform four procedural operations in an automatic mode — registering deputies, arranging speaker lists, registering and summing up votes, and feeding in questions, proposals and corrections. Finally, the system will store and display, in an operational mode, references and statistical information on proceedings.

The system permits the registration of votes in three modes — open, secret or by name. At joint sessions of the Supreme Soviet, it will ensure counting votes separately for each chamber. In the chambers, video display units will be installed capable of presenting procedural information on variable screens. Before voting, the precise numbers required to pass a motion will

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Debate at the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet

THE August 16 sitting of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet chaired by Anatoli Lukyanov, First Vice President of the USSR Supreme Soviet, discussed the disparity between the USSR Constitution and some provisions of the laws of the Soviet Republic of Estonia "On Amendments to the Constitution (fundamental law) of the Republic of Estonia" and "On Elections to Local Soviets of People's Deputies of the Republic of Estonia". These laws passed by the Estonian Supreme Soviet on August 8 restrict the electoral rights of part of Estonia's population through introducing a residence requirement.

Veniamin Yakovlev, Soviet Minister of Justice who spoke at the sitting, pointed out that the decisions of the Estonian Supreme Soviet restrict the electoral right of the republic's citizens by the term of their residence. They should live for no less than two years on the territory of a definite soviet, or no less than five years in Estonia. Only citizens of the republic who have lived for no less than five years on the territory of the soviet, or a total of 10 years in Estonia can stand for election to people's deputies.

He proved with the help of documents the incompatibility between those provisions and articles of the USSR Constitution which guarantee equality of all the citizens of the Soviet Union. He said that acts passed by the Estonian Supreme Soviet introduced the notion of residence requirement, previously unknown in Soviet constitutional and legal practices. They run counter to the international covenant on civil and political rights to which the Soviet Union is a signatory. Consequently, he continued, there are legal grounds for stating that the acts are at variance with the Soviet and international law, with the spirit of the democratisation of our society and the principles of revolutionary perestroika.

Arnold Reutel, President of the Presidium of the Estonian Supreme Soviet, explained at the sitting the reasons why the republican law makers had adopted those acts. Specifically, he linked it with the need to ensure greater competence of elected bodies in local affairs.

Concluding the exchange of views at the sitting, Lukyanov pointed out that ways of overcoming the worsening of inter-ethnic relations were inseparably connected with the consolidation of the Soviet socialist federation. The Soviet federal system should be consolidated, in the first place, through filling with real content the sovereign rights of union republics, though overcoming the existing deformities and excessive centralisation, through the most meticulous taking into consideration of interests, of historic, cultural and other characteristic features of each nation, through the consolidation of guarantees of the equality of citizens of all nationalities living in each republic. It is on this basis that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics will be consolidated and its most important functions will be developed without which a strong modern socialist state practically cannot exist. This is our Party's stand, a platform of its nationalities policy which we are going to discuss at the coming plenary meeting of the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee, he stressed.

According to the strike committee, some 80,000 citizens of the Republic of Estonia will be

put in an unequal position with respect to other citizens of the republic, Lukyanov said. He pointed out in this connection that the Soviet Constitution and its provisions demanding equal rights to citizens and the equality of citizens before the law should be observed without fail. In this sphere the priority of the union law over the republican law which is recorded in Article 74 of the USSR Constitution should be followed strictly and unswervingly. The USSR Constitution is in force, and it should be observed.

Lukyanov suggested the problem be considered not only from legal positions, but also from broader political positions: from the viewpoint of guaranteeing the implementation and consolidation of the principles of Soviet federation and strengthening the mainstays of socialist social system.



Decree of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet ESTONIA

THE Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet has recognised some provisions of the law of the Estonian SSR "On Introducing Amendments and Supplements in the Constitution (fundamental law) of the Estonian SSR" and the law of the Estonian SSR "On the Elections of Local Soviets of People's Deputies of the Estonian SSR" as being at variance with the USSR Constitution and the international legal commitments of the USSR.

The Decree of the Presidium signed by Mikhail Gorbachev and published in Moscow on August 16 says that some provisions of the two laws of Estonia, which set a minimum residence requirement for voting and being elected to soviets of people's deputies, and also voting restrictions for servicemen are at odds with the USSR Constitution.

The afore-mentioned provisions of the laws also violate human rights which are recorded in the international legal acts ratified by the USSR, including in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet decreed to recognise the respective articles of these laws of Estonia as not corresponding to the USSR Constitution and the international legal commitments of the USSR.

The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the country took into account that the Presidium of the Estonian Supreme Soviet will submit for the consideration of the Supreme Soviet of the republic before October 1, 1989 the issue of bringing the afore-mentioned provisions of the Estonian laws in line with the USSR Constitution and the international legal acts ratified by the USSR. □



The principles of Soviet federation are above all the equality of rights and duties of a person of any nationality all over the USSR territory, the more so since equality of citizens stems not only from the essence of the Soviet system, but also from international obligations assumed by the USSR. And equality of citizens of any nationality before law will always remain a matter of importance to the whole country. All republics and their federation are equally interested in it, Lukyanov said. Involved in this are not relations of a republic with Moscow or the USSR, as it is

sometimes asserted. It is above all a matter of relations of each republic with other equal republics that form the Soviet Union.

Presenting the Soviet Union only as Moscow, as an extremely centralised force opposing republics, is used quite often in far from good purposes, for whipping up passions, lessening confidence for the central authorities, belittling what Soviet federation gave to every people, every nation and nationality.

The Soviet Communist Party and the Soviet State have been and will remain the expressors of the will of the working class and the entire working people, of their democratic ideology and internationalist principles. Nobody should have any doubts about this, Lukyanov said.

He noted that novelties in the legislation about the elections of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic affected also servicemen, their representation in the soviets. The Soviet people is not interested in keeping collectives of the military apart from the participation in the country's political life. The support and qualitative upgrading of the Soviet Army, its perfection as a school of internationalism and patriotism – such are the talks that the Soviet Communist Party and the Soviet State put to the country's armed forces. We shall never abandon this stand, Lukyanov emphasised.

"So amendments of the legislation on elections adopted in the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic are unacceptable to us not only juridically, but also politically," Lukyanov said. "They lead to the aggravation of inter-ethnic and social relations, to the aggravation which precisely has a negative effect on the solution of complex tasks put forward by perestroika."

It was taken into notice that the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic will submit for the consideration of the republic's Supreme Soviet before October 1, 1989, the question of bringing the afore-mentioned norms in the Constitution of the USSR.

The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet also adopted a decree which confirmed the statement made on behalf of the Soviet leadership that the rights of all Soviet servicemen who were taken prisoner in Afghanistan and returned home will not be infringed in any way, that they will be able to use in full volume civil rights envisaged by the Constitution of the USSR and that, proceeding from supreme considerations of socialist humanism, the Soviet State will show mercy to those of them who committed illegal actions. These persons will not be brought to criminal responsibility for crimes committed.

The draft resolution of the USSR Supreme Soviet "On the Amnesty of Former Servicemen of the Limited Contingent of Soviet Troops in Afghanistan who Committed Crimes and were Taken Prisoner by the Afghan Armed Opposition" has been endorsed. The draft resolution is referred for the consideration of a regular session of the USSR Supreme Soviet. □

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Soviet Communist Party's nationalities policy

THE nationalities question has recently become extremely acute in the USSR, and the solution of these problems is of great importance for the destinies of perestroika and the country, a document entitled "The Party's Nationalities Policy in Present Day Conditions (Platform of the Soviet Communist Party)", issued in Moscow on August 17 says.

The document recalls the unification of Soviet republics on the basis of federation and the formation of a federal state on the basis of the 1922 Treaty and the 1924 constitution of the USSR, which enabled the peoples of the country to carry out industrialisation, overcome the backwardness of remote lands and level out economic and social development of peoples. An integral national economy formed as a result. The social structure of society changed. Possibilities for preserving and developing national originality of peoples were created. "Despite contradictions of subsequent development, there was steady economic, social and cultural progress of peoples," the document says.

But the administrative-command system ignored the needs of national development. Independence of republics was curtailed under the pretext of the protection of the interests of the whole state. The tendency to unitarianism gained momentum. "Mass repressions, particularly resettlement of whole peoples to other republics and regions, was one of the most serious causes of the aggravation of ethnic problems. Such a fate befell Kalmyks, Karachais, Balkars, Chechens, Ingushes, Crimea Tatars, Meskhetian Turks, Germans, Koreans, Greeks and Kurds." And even though corresponding decisions were condemned and abrogated after the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, the consequences of the injustice have still not been totally eliminated.

Interest in the history of one's people, in its cultural values and traditions was awakened in people with the growth of national awareness. But theoretical provisions for enforced rapprochement of nations, assertions that the nationalities question was solved completely and in a final way interfered with the satisfaction of these demands. This led to attempts to play down national multiformity.

Now that Soviet society has embarked on major radical reforms, we need to ensure free national development, enhance the inter-ethnic unity of society and consolidate our multi-ethnic Soviet State. "Harmonisation of inter-ethnic relations on a new basis is one of the supreme goals of the Party's nationalities policy", the document says.

Recent events lead to the conclusion that there is a need for radical transformations in the Soviet federation, the document emphasises. The Soviet federation has a huge potential which should be tapped in full measure. The main condition of stability and successful development of the Soviet federation is the optimum correlation between the rights of union republics and of the Soviet Union as a whole.

The Soviet Communist Party's platform on the nationalities question sets out key problems whose coordinated solutions, suiting everyone, should be found.

One of the main problems involves clearly determining the competence and mutual obligations of the USSR and union republics. This involves reaffirming the generally recognised formula: "Without a strong union there are no strong republics, and without strong republics there is no strong union."

The second key problem formulated in the document deals with republics' transition to cost-accounting and self-financing. It is subdivided into a number of problems to which the Soviet Communist Party states its attitude clearly and precisely. The question of citizenship is among the most important problems. "A citizen of the republic is simultaneously a citizen of the USSR. Privileges of some and infringement of the rights of others for reasons of nationality, religion, language and duration of residence are impermissible."

Entering the Soviet Union, the republics relegated to it the implementation of the main tasks of foreign policy, but preserved the right to maintain relations with foreign countries and international organisations. Still another problem concerns the coordination of rights of the union and republics in ensuring the country's security. Key questions also include the status and activity of public organisations in the updated federation, the legal status of the Russian Federation and its national composition and state make-up, and ways of transforming the Soviet federation.

The Soviet Communist Party has set out its views on matters in the document published today.

One of its sections is devoted to the role and legal status of national autonomy in the country. It is proposed to substantially widen the rights of autonomous republics, to enhance the legal status of autonomous regions and districts, to take into consideration relations not only within national-state formations in the USSR, but also among nations, peoples and national groups in

republics and regions of the country and to give attention to the situation of national minorities of the north, Siberia and the Far East.

The section devoted to national cultures and languages sets out the Party stand in accordance with which "the Soviet Communist Party proceeds from the recognition of the originality of national cultures, their unique values . . . Condemning infringement of national cultures in any form, the Party sees its task in ensuring free development of the spiritual life of all peoples of the Soviet Union." It attaches particular importance to the further free development of the languages of Soviet peoples.

The document gives much attention to the nationalities question and the exercise of human rights. The principle of full equality of citizens of the USSR regardless of race and nationality is confirmed. "Soviet citizens should feel at home in any area of the country. Such is the supreme and final goal of all work to harmonise inter-ethnic relations." It contains proposals to adopt an appropriate law, enhance the guarantees of the rights for tuition in the native language and widen the legal protection of national honour and dignity of Soviet people.

Dwelling on the ideological aspect of the nationalities question, the document emphasises that internationalism is irreconcilable with nationalism and chauvinism. Those who deliberately stir up ethnic strife and provoke inter-ethnic conflicts should be rebuffed. Freedom should not be replaced with anarchy and violence. The heightening of national awareness should be distinguished from nationalism. □

Viktor Chebrikov on nationalities policy

"WHILE renewing Soviet society and carrying out political and economic reforms, we cannot but renew the nationalities policy as well. But its kernel and fundamental precepts remain Leninist — equality of the peoples and equality of people regardless of nationality, the principles of internationalism," Viktor Chebrikov, member of the Politburo and Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, said in an interview with the newspaper *Pravda*, printed on August 19. He was commenting on the CPSU's draft platform of the Party's nationalities policy in present-day conditions.

The development of Soviet federation is one of the most important problems, Chebrikov said, and stressed the need for its radical transformation. It is very important to clearly determine the competence, mutual obligations of the union, republics and all autonomous entities, he said. And this calls for a renewal of the constitutions — from the basic law of the USSR to the constitutions of the union and autonomous republics.

"The world experience shows that progress in the development of any society, not only a socialist one, can be attained not through confederative designs, but through the integration and the pooling of efforts," he stressed.

There is obviously no need to prove that the union law should have the supreme power in a unified multi-national state. Chebrikov said. The

existence of a unified state is unthinkable without that. Dimensions of the union's law-making activities are a different matter. It would apparently be wrong for the union to regulate literally all aspects of life in the republics.

"It is our state's supreme constitutional duty to protect human rights, the rights of a citizen on the whole territory of the country no matter in which republic he lives. This directly accords with international law practices. Therefore, when the right of that or other people or even an individual are restricted on national, religious or residence duration grounds, the state should protect that people and every citizen from the infringement of their rights, Chebrikov said.

"The introduction of a residence duration requirement contradicts the USSR Constitution. It flouts one of the basic human rights, which is inadmissible in any country," he stressed.

Chebrikov declared against a possible revision of frontiers of separate union or autonomous republics. He said that there are all possibilities to solve any national or social question within the framework of the existing national-state set-up.

"A way out of any crisis situation is the policy of national reconciliation and compromise, but not 're-carving' of frontiers or, even worse, resettlement of whole peoples. There is definitely no other way out," Chebrikov stressed.

"The draft platform does not offer a detailed solution for that or other problems, but it furnishes a political foundation on which the union, republican and local Soviet government bodies will design a mechanism that would help to solve pressing problems of development of Soviet nations and inter-ethnic relations," Chebrikov said in conclusion. □

Law of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

ON THE INTRODUCTION OF AMENDMENTS AND ADDITIONS TO THE LAW OF THE USSR "ON THE STATE ENTERPRISE (ASSOCIATION)"

THE Supreme Soviet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics resolves:

1. To introduce the following amendments and additions to the Law of the USSR "On the State Enterprise (Association)":

1. Item 3 of Article 2 shall be complemented with the following paragraphs:

"To give the work collective a greater incentive for improving the results of their work, the enterprise shall extensively use new, progressive methods of socialist economic management, including collective contracts, lease arrangements and co-operative forms.

The enterprise, as an independent producer of goods, can operate on the securities market, issue shares for the mobilisation of additional financial resources and take up loans for specific purposes".

2. In Article 3:

In the second paragraph of Item 1 the words "with a permission of a superior body" shall be crossed out;

Item 1 shall be complemented with the following paragraph after the present fourth paragraph:

"The enterprise has the right to use its own discretion other forms of cost accounting as well as lease arrangements, envisaged by legislative acts of the USSR and decisions of the Government of the USSR".

3. In Article 5:

Item 4 shall be complemented with the following paragraph:

(continued from front page)

appear on two large indicator boards. The computer will then compare the number of votes in favour or against a point with the quorum and display both the numerical results and one of the two statements: "motion passed" or "motion rejected".

To cast their vote, the deputies will be required to push one of the three buttons on their desks — for, against or abstained.

In a secret ballot, the by-name processor will be turned off, in a by-name vote, the procedure will be reversed, in which case names will be listed under four headings: for, against, abstained and did not vote.

Experts, presently installing the system, believe its capacity is immense. It can operate in dozens, indeed, hundreds of modes, if the need arises. Another system of this kind will be installed in the Kremlin Palace of Congresses to service congresses of people's deputies.

The newspaper points out that practically all the equipment that is now being installed in the Kremlin, was made in the Soviet Union. Its installation is the responsibility of the Leningrad enterprise Agrogremmonitor. □

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"The structure of the enterprise and its subdivisions shall be decided by the enterprise itself";

The first paragraph of Item 5 shall be complemented with the words:

"Its structure shall be approved by the association";

Items 6 and 7 shall be laid down as follows:

"6. Alongside its structural units the association may comprise independent enterprises, which shall enjoy rights in accordance with this Law. The association shall manage such enterprises by performing the functions of a superior body with respect to them and shall have the right to centralise fully or partially the performance of their individual production and economic functions. The assets of the enterprises needed for the performance of the said functions may be centralised with their consent.

The management of the association, by a decision of the structural units and enterprises affiliated to it, shall be effected by the administration of the parental structural unit (parental enterprise) of the association or by a special managerial body.

7. Enterprises, associations and organisations, regardless of their departmental affiliation, may independently set up on the contract basis concerns, consortiums, intersectoral state associations, state production amalgamations, various associations and other big organisational structures, including those with the participation of co-operatives and joint enterprises set up together with foreign companies. State enterprises (associations) affiliated to these organisational structures shall retain their economic latitude and operate in accordance with this Law.

The structural units and independent enterprises affiliated to the association shall have the right, by a decision of their work collectives, to withdraw from the association with the observance of the contract terms and obligations set at the formation of the association.

At switching over to lease arrangements, enterprises, associations and organisations shall have the right to discontinue their accountability to sectoral and territorial managerial bodies, and the relations between them shall be regulated by a lease contract."

4. In Article 6:

Item 5 shall be complemented with the following paragraph:

"Shall independently introduce social benefits for its workers within the limits of the earned funds"

5. The words "and by a ministry (department) of the USSR" and "ministries and departments of the USSR" shall be crossed out of the third paragraph of Item 1, Article 9.

6. The fourth paragraph of Item 3, Article 10 shall be complemented with the words:

"There shall be no 100 per cent state orders for producer goods. The differences arising between enterprises (associations) and their superior bodies over the procedure for the placement of state orders shall be examined by state arbitration authorities".

7. The first paragraph of Item 4, Article 14 shall be formulated as follows:

"4. The enterprise shall form a wage fund and a material incentive fund (labour repayment fund) depending on the end results of the work. The rational proportion between the share of the cost-accounting revenues of the work collec-

tive, allocated for development, and the share of funds used for labour pay shall be regulated by a system of taxation".

8. Item 4 of Article 19 shall be formulated as follows:

"4. The enterprise shall have the right to conduct independently, following the established procedure, export and import operations (including those on the markets of capitalist and developing countries), setting up when necessary cost-accounting foreign-trade firms or entrusting the handling of such operations to other foreign-trade organisations under contract".

9. The third paragraph of Item 1, Article 21 shall be complemented with the following words: "notably, in the form of joint-stock and limited liability societies".

10. Item 1 of Article 23 shall be complemented with the following paragraphs:

"At the settlement of the question of the transfer of the entire property of the enterprise on a lease to a leasers' organisation or a co-operative.

Associations shall be set up on a voluntary basis by enterprises at their own initiative or at the initiative of a superior body.

Re-organisation of associations and the cessation of their operation shall be done by a decision of the structural units and enterprises affiliated to them."

11. To instruct the Council of Ministers of the USSR to ensure the compliance of the decisions of the government of the USSR and of the normative acts of ministries, state committees and departments of the USSR with this Law by October 1, 1989.

President
of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR
M. GORBACHEV

Moscow, Kremlin.

August 3, 1989.

(Pravda, August 11. In full.)

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The events of 1939: a view fifty years on

THE August 18 edition of *Pravda* carries an interview with Alexander Yakovlev, member of the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee and Secretary of the Central Committee, in which he evaluates the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Treaty signed 50 years ago — on August 23, 1939. Yakovlev heads the commission of the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR on the political and legal appraisal of the treaty.

Noting that the commission has not completed its political and legal study of the circumstances of concluding the treaty and the content of the agreements themselves, Yakovlev nonetheless expressed his view on some issues related to this document.

He, first and foremost, recalled the situation before the conclusion of the treaty. The transformation of isolated conflicts into world war was proceeding apace. And in 1939, when the threat of a great war was virtually knocking at the door, the Soviet leadership tried for yet another time to create an anti-fascist front to include the USSR, Britain and France, amongst others. This front could be the only force capable of rescuing peace.

The USSR's efforts were futile. What could be done if the other side entered talks for the sake of political intrigues at your expense rather than concrete accords? What agreement could be reached if the British and French leaders, as documents show, were doing their best to redirect German aggression against the East? How could one help Poland stave off the danger of enslavement if its leaders did not even want to hear about any direct or indirect co-operation with the Soviet Union and its armed forces?

Serious Soviet, Polish, British, West German and other researchers admit that by August 19-20, 1939, the moment when Stalin consented to the visit of Ribbentrop to Moscow to finally clarify Germany's intentions, the Soviet Union was left without a choice. The USSR could not prevent war on its own. Its efforts to win over Britain and France to the idea of an anti-fascist front had failed. The USSR was compelled to consider how to avoid being swept into a war for which it was even more ill-prepared in 1939 than it was in 1941.

At the same time, the seeming probability of Nazi Germany's concluding deals with other Western powers directed against the Soviet Union could not be ignored. It is an historical fact that the Weiss Operational Plan, which was endorsed by Hitler on April 11, 1939, envisaged the seizure of Lithuania and Latvia immediately after inflicting a military defeat on Poland. Consequently, a war against the Soviet Union would have begun at that time or a bit later and from frontiers more preferable for the aggressor.

This is not all. In August 1939 the Red Army had been engaged in heavy fighting against the Japanese militarists on Khalkhin Gol. The latter, suffering a major defeat, insisted the Berlin fulfil its allied obligations under the anti-Comintern pact.

The talks on military issues between the USSR, Britain and France were deadlocked by August 20, 1939. At the request of the British and French sides, the talks were suspended for an indefinite period of time, although London, as well as Moscow, knew pretty well that German aggression against Poland was planned to start between August 25 and 28, or in any case

no later than September 1.

It should also be remembered, Yakovlev says, that the Germans had a standby position if the Soviet leadership refused to receive Ribbentrop (incidentally, initial requests to receive him were turned down). London and Berlin agreed at secret talks in mid-August for Goering's trip to the British Isles on August 23 for a covert meeting with Chamberlain. Judging by documents, the two empires planned to hammer out "a historic compromise" of a global scale, ignoring the interests of not only the USSR, Poland and some other east European countries but even of France.

"It is worth mentioning," Yakovlev went on to say, "that Britain and France formalised their non-aggression understandings with Germany at that time and were, objectively, in an advantageous position as compared with us." It will be recalled that the Germans concentrated their crack troops not in the west but in the east and that they saw the most favourable opportunities to implement the Reich's much-touted plans in the eastern direction after Austria's Anschluss and Czechoslovakia's occupation.

Yakovlev emphasises that, to be objective and despite the justified criticism of Stalin's domestic and foreign policies, Soviet national interests required a vigorous defence at that time. Since there were no collective efforts to bridle the aggressor, it was necessary to take care and prevent "the Polish campaign" from turning into a prelude for the capture of the Baltic states and realisation of Hitler's plans to grab "lebensraum" and capture the Ukraine as a "raw material and food base" for the Reich, and stop the march to the east.

Touching on a secret protocol to the treaty, Yakovlev said that it is more difficult to assess it than the treaty. He noted that secret agreements or supplements to treaties were often concluded in the pre-war period. The Soviet Union was often a subject of such secret deals concluded between Germany, Britain, France and Poland. Though the original of the secret protocol has not been uncovered, there is no doubt that it existed, taking into account discovered documents, including those found in recent months. Yakovlev pointed out.

Stressing that all this was a factual aspect of the matter in hand, Alexander Yakovlev turned to the political and legal evaluation of the protocols. He acknowledged that from the political point of view we observe here a deviation from the Leninist norms of Soviet foreign policy, from Lenin's renunciation of secret diplomacy, a revision of the strategic course towards collective security.

Recalling that no originals of the secret protocol had been found either in Soviet or foreign archives and that the text is judged by a photo copy, which, according to the official West-German version, records some of the documents, Yakovlev said: "It is of little importance for me personally whether the text of the copy is authentic or not. It is more important that a collusion was in the making. And it was, without a doubt, a collusion."

The contacts with Berlin, which grew into negotiations as of August 15th, and up to Ribbentrop's arrival in Moscow, were known only to Stalin and Molotov, Yakovlev notes. Nobody from the leadership of the Party and the state, besides them, knew about the secret protocol. It was not discussed either in the Politburo, Supreme Soviet or the government. It was excluded from the ratification procedures. Strictly speaking, it was intended to record the intentions of the two sides, because juridically, due to

the special way it was drawn up, the protocol cannot be qualified as a legal act, that is an act having legal effect.

Noting that the idea of demarcating the interests of the two powers belonged to the Germans, Alexander Yakovlev expressed the view that Stalin had no need at all to accept the text of the protocol literally, if, of course, it corresponds to the now known copy, because the great-power claim for the region's "territorial-political recarving" conflicted with the sovereignty and independence of a whole line of states.

I believe we shall display responsibility and political principledness if we condemn unequivocally the pre-war Soviet leadership's deviation from the Leninist principles of foreign policy, no matter how it is explained, the chairman of the commission said.

Turning to the current heated debates on the Soviet-German Treaty, particularly in the Baltic republics, Alexander Yakovlev noted: "The treaty of August 23 can be regarded from absolutely different angles, but in this case, too, it is necessary to admit that neither the treaty nor the protocol to it had determined the legal and political status of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Their status was changed due to other circumstances. It is even more far-fetched to seek some kind of interrelation between the present status of the three republics and the non-aggression treaty."

In conclusion Alexander Yakovlev said that the Foreign Ministry of the USSR was planning to publish many documents of that period. He expressed the conviction that truth, no matter how bitter, is the best way to eliminate old misunderstandings and prevent new ones. □

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A complete copy of the interview may be obtained free from the following address:

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Afghanistan – Statement by Soviet Foreign Ministry

YURI GREMITSKIKH, First Deputy head of the Soviet Foreign Ministry's Information Directorate, at a briefing for Soviet and foreign journalists in Moscow on August 21, read a Soviet Foreign Ministry statement on Afghanistan.

The statement says:

President Najibullah of the Republic of Afghanistan in a national radio address in connection with the 70th anniversary of the restoration of Afghanistan's independence has reaffirmed the leadership's course towards national reconciliation.

He set out specific proposals directed at ending the bloodshed and finding a peaceful settlement to Afghanistan's internal difference.

The president offered a clear-cut plan, that takes into account all specifics of the current situation, to form a new Afghan Government that would represent the interests of all Afghan political forces.

The plan envisages dialogue between the Government of the Republic of Afghanistan and all other Afghan groups and all Afghans on the whole who are interested in ending the bloodshed and establishing peace.

Holding an all-Afghan peace conference that would create a plenipotentiary leading council and proclaiming a six-month cease-fire form key elements of that mechanism.

It is planned that the leading council would prepare a traditional supreme forum, Loya Jir-

gah, that is traditionally formed from among the most respected people to handle drastic problems that determine the country's destinies.

This provides for elaborating a new Afghan constitution and a law on parliamentary elections that would lead to the creation of a new parliament and a new government.

Holding an international conference on Afghanistan is a major component of the plan. This idea, as is known, had already been expressed by the Afghan leadership. It was fully backed by the Soviet Union and several other countries. At present, this idea is becoming increasingly specific and tangible.

It indicates countries that might take part in the conference and its mandate that would guarantee Afghanistan's permanent neutrality, non-militarisation and political rights for all members of Afghan society.

The plan, offered by President Najibullah, clearly reveals the interrelationship between internal and external aspects of the Afghan problem, which is so much needed at present.

It is no accident that the Afghan Government calls for UN observation over the future universal elections that are part of the plan.

The Soviet Union regards the Afghan leadership's latest proposals as an important and realistic programme opening on broad vistas for establishing peace on the much-suffering land of Afghanistan and for the free expression of the will of all Afghans.

By advancing its new plan, the Afghan leadership has proved yet again that it does not lay claims to the monopoly of power and that it

wholly proceeds in its domestic and foreign policy from the interests of the entire nation.

The Government of the Republic of Afghanistan has confirmed that it has always proceeded from the premise that the military path is not the way to meet Afghanistan's national interests. The military path is rejected by the Afghan leadership.

The idea of starting an inter-Afghan dialogue and looking for mutually acceptable solutions through this dialogue meets growing understanding and support even among many opposition groups and field commanders.

Now only the most extremist sections of the opposition that have not abandoned the illusion of seizing power for themselves continue to ignore the objective realities in present-day Afghanistan.

Those who would like to continue taking risks in the armed struggle should know that such designs will ultimately backfire.

President Najibullah's proposals open up new broad opportunities for the solution of the long drawn-out conflict and take into account the entire complexity of the Afghan situation, the entire spectrum of the interests of various sections of Afghan society and make it possible to bring an Afghan settlement within the channel of practical actions.

The Soviet Union hopes that the Afghan leadership's proposals will evoke understanding and support of all Afghans and the entire international community and will be translated into deeds leading to peace in Afghanistan. □

Soviet-French co-ordinating committee established

THE Soviet Ministry of Civil Aviation and the French construction company Bouygues have signed an agreement on co-operation regarding the development of the infrastructure of the Soviet airline Aeroflot both in the Soviet Union and other countries.

The agreement envisages the establishment in Moscow, on the basis of the international commercial civil aviation administration, of a Soviet-French co-ordinating committee. It will co-ordinate the construction and operation of air terminals and hotels in the Crimea, Georgia, Uzbekistan, Moscow, Barcelona, London and Brussels and identify new opportunities for co-operation, including enlisting other interested organisations. □

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Pravda on Afghanistan's 70th anniversary

AFGHANISTAN'S road to independence has been difficult and thorny. Independent Afghanistan was born in the flames of battle. Relations with Soviet Russia played a decisive role in the rise of free Afghanistan in that complicated period when its future was at stake, the newspaper *Pravda* says on August 21 on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the restoration of Afghanistan's independence (1919), a national holiday of the Republic of Afghanistan.

The documents of those years illustrate the dramatism of the events, the Afghans' search for true friends and allies, their unbending desire to extricate themselves from colonial fetters and occupy a fitting place among nations.

The Soviet Union's policy became a regular foreign policy factor of consolidation of Afghanistan's independence, and the relations of friendship, good-neighbourliness and co-operation between the two countries were consolidated by an agreement.

The complex Afghan situation is being recklessly used to heighten imperialist interference in Afghanistan's affairs. This interference is not only of an anti-Afghan, but also of an anti-Soviet nature, *Pravda* notes.

"But, perhaps, since the time of Afghanistan's acquiring independence the danger of losing it has never been so grave as now," the newspaper stresses. "The irreconcilable opposition, kindling a civil war, is bargaining its national inte-

rests with Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United States. Imperialist interference is growing to proportions of an armed intervention, involving not only Afghan and foreign mercenaries but also regular Pakistani units. Weapons are streaming to the conflict zone."

"The critical situation is fraught with ever newer sufferings for the Afghan people. But it is not desperate. The Kabul leadership is offering a reasonable way out — national reconciliation, strict compliance with the Geneva Accords and convocation of an international conference on Afghanistan."

Pravda expresses confidence that "reason will triumph in the final account. The Afghan people's staunchness is defending the country's independence and the experience of the past years are an earnest of that. The Soviet Union is siding with Afghanistan, not only as guarantor of the Geneva Accords, but also as a reliable and tested friend." □

MAN IN THE MODERN WORLD

Prominent Soviet philosophers at a round-table discussion organised by the Novosti Press Agency and the Institute of Philosophy of the USSR Academy of Sciences.

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Izvestia on Baltic republics' joining the USSR

THE attempts by some historians to question the correctness of the present European borders in connection with the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Treaty are groundless, *Izvestia* observer Vikenty Matveev believes. On August 17 the newspaper published his long article which analyses the developments in Europe before the start of World War II, specifically, the situation with the Baltic republics.

It would be wrong to assert that the presence of Soviet troops in summer 1940 in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania did not contribute in any way to the restoration of Soviet power which had been eliminated there with the help of Western countries two decades earlier, when Soviet Russia had not been able to help them. Links between the working class of the Baltic region and Russia are deep-rooted. This is why those who try to explain the reasons for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania joining the USSR in the summer of 1940 only on the basis of what was achieved in connection with the 1939 Soviet-German Non-Aggression Treaty is removing a link from a chain of factors.

Close ties between Russia and the Baltic region, the newspaper continued, were based mostly on common interests. Even at the time, when far from progressive regimes came to power in the Baltic republics following counter-revolutionary coups, many politicians there were seriously concerned over the preparation by Germany of plans for the colonisation of the Baltic region.

German archives based on reports of Nazi diplomats and intelligence workers show that they were unpleasantly surprised at the warm welcome accorded to the Soviet troops by the Latvian, Estonian and Lithuanian population.

History has proved the futility of plans for the establishment of world domination hatched by the aggressors, the newspaper says. At the same time, it reaffirmed and consolidated the situation which reflects the collapse of these plans and constitutes today an important part of the present set-up on our continent. This is why even those Western politicians who can hardly be described as friends of the Soviet Union do not support those who try to question some of the significant results of World War II connected with the present situation in Europe, making references to protocols to the treaty signed on August 23, 1939. □

Soviet newspaper gives data on losses in Afghanistan

FOR the first time ever a yearly breakdown of data on Soviet losses in Afghanistan has been published in the Soviet press.

The data, published in *Pravda* on August 17, includes losses suffered directly in action and general ones, including death from wounds, diseases and accidents.

1979 - 86 servicemen died, including 10 officers. Combat losses were 70 and 9 respectively. 1980 - 1,484 servicemen including 199 officers. Combat losses: 1,229 and 170.

1981 - 1,298, including 189 officers. Combat losses: 1,033 and 155.

1982 - 1,948, including 238 officers. Combat losses: 1,623 and 215.

1983 - 1,446, including 210 officers. Combat losses: 1,057 and 179.

1984 - 2,343, including 305 officers. Combat losses: 2,060 and 285.

1985 - 1,868, including 273 officers. Combat losses: 1,552 and 240.

1986 - 1,333, including 216 officers. Combat losses: 1,068 and 198.

1987 - 1,215, including 212 officers. Combat losses: 1,004 and 189.

1988 - 759, including 117 officers. Combat losses: 639 and 106.

1989 - 53 servicemen, including ten officers. Combat losses: 46 and 9 respectively.

Besides, 330 servicemen, including 21 officers, were reported missing in action or were taken prisoner throughout the period.

"We all cherish the memory of the fallen sons of the Motherland. The one who tries to belittle or negate their feat does not deserve to call himself a patriot," *Pravda* says.

"They - either those who perished or those who did not return from the war - cannot be answerable for the actions of people who covertly sent troops to a foreign country. This is one of the conclusions.

"Another conclusion is that no group of people, even if vested with supreme power, shall or may take such responsible decisions without the Supreme Soviet's sanction," the newspaper emphasises.

"The third conclusion is that it is necessary to show every care and attention, as is being urged by the Party, for all servicemen, disabled soldiers and their families, and the families of those who perished."

The newspaper describes what is being done for the people and families whose life has been affected by the war in Afghanistan, and stresses that very much is yet to be done.

Pravda also points out that from now on the privileges and benefits intended for servicemen who performed their duty in the Republic of Afghanistan also apply to servicemen who took part in combat actions in Vietnam, Syria, Egypt, and other countries. □

Officers of the State Security Committee meet scientists

PERESTROIKA, democratisation and openness are increasingly manifest in the activity of the USSR State Security Committee. This idea keynoted the pronouncements by State Security Committee officers at a meeting with scientists of the Soviet Academy of Sciences' Oriental Studies Institute.

This meeting turned into a lively and open dialogue, confirming that "traditions" of maintaining silence about the State Security Committee are gradually becoming a thing of the past. Moreover, it was stressed that in conditions of the democratisation processes in the country the management of the State Security Committee attaches particular importance to informing the public about the security service's activity. Some news media already have special rubrics telling about the State Security Committee's work. This rubric will soon appear in the government *Herald Weekly*.

Meetings with work collectives similar to the one which was held today are becoming traditional. Vladimir Strunin, head of the USSR State Security Committee Press Bureau, said that free access will soon be opened to the Cheka Hall, a museum telling of the history and today's work of the state security bodies.

Speakers noted that as society's life undergoes changes, the functions of the committee are also modified and the priorities in its activity revised. For instance, the Fifth Department, which was engaged in efforts to prevent acts of the so-called ideological subversion, was disbanded. On the other hand, security bodies' involvement in efforts to fight organised crime, smuggling narcotics trafficking and industrial espionage is becoming increasingly relevant today.

Speakers pointed to the State Security Committee's interest in forming and strengthening ties with secret services in other countries to achieve such common goals as to stamp out terrorism, drug trafficking and smuggling. In this regard, they cited as positive the example of the coordination of efforts by the USSR and Israel to detain and extradite the terrorists who took hostage children in the city of Ordzhonikidze, Northern Caucasus, with the aim of hijacking a plane and commandeering it to Israel.

It was reported that the State Security Committee studies the issue of establishing working contacts with Interpol. However, conditions of a political nature, which are set forth by Interpol, hamper this at present. □

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A NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER: Supporters and Opponents

by Valentin Shchetinin

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A common European home: What kind of home and why? Keys of Confidence

THE Soviet Union has drawn the necessary conclusions from the historical past of Europe and has reassessed many things in its approaches to European affairs. Relying on the noble traditions of European humanism and learning lessons from the tragic events in which the history of the continent abounds — specifically, from the confrontation of the postwar period — the Soviet Union has put forward the idea of a “common European home”.

This idea is a product of perestroika and of new political thinking which have been deciding the Soviet foreign-policy line for more than four years now. The idea, like a seed, has fallen onto fertile soil and has proved quite timely. The important thing is that the project has begun to acquire definite political contours. This is confirmed, among other things, by the results of the Vienna meeting. As noted by Mikhail Gorbachev, the meeting “is putting the European process at such a level where it is possible to distinguish the first contours of the ‘common European home’.”

First of all, it is hard to imagine such a home unless it becomes a forum and a centre of all-European political co-operation. If the European states manage to find a common language in deciding the political future of the continent, it will be easier to tackle all the other problems, too. A new political Europe can only be based on a strict and just balance of interests of all states, on their freedom of choice, on non-interference in each other's affairs and on the renunciation of confrontational thinking, antagonism, the enemy image and of the use of ideological struggle and propaganda for inciting mistrust and enmity.

The ‘common European home’ needs a firm material foundation. This means that constructive co-operation between the two parts of Europe, the Eastern and the Western, should become more intensive, meaningful and dynamic. Its present level can hardly satisfy anyone — all the more so since the blood vessels of economic co-operation are still to be safeguarded from clots such as bans on the export of technologies, restrictions, sanctions and so on. Another problem is that an economically strong and able Europe cannot be built without a joint settlement of the numerous ecological problems. They are dangerous — in fact, probably more dangerous than it seems now. The Final Act of the Helsinki Conference provides for the adoption of joint measures to protect the environment, but the progress in their implementation has been very slow, just as with the other projects involving the establishment of an all-European transportation and energy network, the development of public health and exchanges in new scientific and technical ideas. That is why it is imperative to broaden the scope of co-operation so as to reach an appropriate scientific and technical and technological level of equitable, constructive and mutually beneficial co-operation on an all-European basis.

So far, there are too many explosive and inflammatory materials on the site where the common European home is to be built. The level of military confrontation is unreasonably high and excessive. A strong edifice of European security cannot be built on this mined land. That is why military detente is needed for Europe as fresh air, as clear water, as green forests and as carefully protected cultural treasures and ancient monuments. In this manner, the concept of a ‘common European home’ is also a concept of its demilitarisation.

This concept calls for discussion and for se-

rious analysis by the joint efforts of the East and West. It should not be taken in a simplified, literal manner, far less in a vulgar way. For example, the announcer of one of the Deutsche Welle programmes from Cologne perceives a ‘common European home’ as a kind of “socialist barracks”. He alleges that the only reason why Moscow has put forward this idea is to make Western Europe socialist in the long run.

by Vladen Kuznetsov

Needless to say, Moscow has never had these kind of ideas or plans. The USSR stands firmly on the ground of strict political realism. It sees a ‘common European home’ as a place where no one will try to convert others into his own faith and where the freedom of socio-political choice by each European nation will remain guaranteed, where all nations without exception will retain their distinctive ethnic characteristics, and where new political thinking will liberate people's minds from partiality, crude notions about others, simplification and primitivism in the evaluation of their intentions and motives.

The point is that in the new, favourable conditions to build upon what was started by the Helsinki Conference in 1975. The task is to combine political detente with the military one and to build gradually a Europe whose life will be determined not by the doctrine of intimidation but by the doctrine of joint, collective security — a Europe where military and nuclear confrontation would be replaced by disarmament, good-neighbourliness and co-operation. A Europe without its present ecological dangers, with strong economic, technological, cultural and humanitarian bridges, and with human rights and liberties implemented in all their entirety.

The road to such a “home” is certainly not a smooth highway. It is a road for trail-blazers. However, over the 44 postwar years Europe has managed to resolve so many major problems that there is no doubt that it is able to traverse this unexplored marathon route, too, on which lie quite a few dangers.

Both in the East and in the West of the continent an integration of the national economies of different states with similar social systems is under way. Is there any way to integrate these processes, too? After all, it is in the interests of Europe not to allow them to drift away from each other as ships at sea? The Soviet Union does not look at the situation in the EEC from the critical angle alone, but sees all its aspects, including positive ones which match the spirit of the day. On the other hand, some aspects of West European integration are definitely alarming. Will it not slip into the role of a kind of twin or understudy of NATO? Will it not begin to rope in more new states under its own and then the North Atlantic aegis?

The conclusion in 1988 of the agreement between CMEA and the EEC indicates that points of contact between the two integrating groups have been found. It would be worthwhile to use them to broaden the scope of co-operation in such a way so that the two integration processes should develop in the same direction, towards equitable, constructive and mutually beneficial co-operation on a common European basis.

How is one to regard in this connection integration in the military sphere? After all, in the NATO circles it is often taken out of the framework of rational unification of resources and technological innovations, and is placed at the service of still sharper military confrontation. The current attempts at compensation and modernisation, in response to the elimination of two classes of nuclear missiles, and the efforts to set up various joint military teams and Atlantic “multilateral forces” for operations outside the NATO zone, a “European arms pool”, a new

variant of a “European defensive community” or an “independent military pole” lead not to the unification but to the disunity of Europe and to lower rather than greater security.

An edifice built on a mined ground will never be strong. The attempts to prolong the life of the doctrine of nuclear deterrence do not contribute to the consolidation of this shaky foundation. It is impossible to agree with the opinion of those who believe that they can do both things at once with equal success: to build the political frame of a ‘common European home’ and to continue the arms race.

As noted by Mikhail Gorbachev on July 6, 1989 in his first ever speech at Strasbourg in the headquarters of the Council of Europe which unites 23 European states, the philosophy of the concept of a ‘common European home’ rules out the possibility of an armed confrontation and of the use or threat of force, by an alliance against another alliance, inside the alliances or anywhere else.

The Warsaw Treaty Organisation is suggesting to NATO a carefully thought-out and balanced programme of attenuation of military confrontation: from the elimination of all the imbalances and asymmetries between the two politico-military alliances to deep arms and troops reductions in Europe, including tactical nuclear weapons, tactical attack aviation and tanks. From confidence-building measures on the all-European scale and from the comparison of the military doctrines of the Warsaw Pact and NATO to the conversion of the military formations of the two alliances into exclusive defensive forces. From the establishment of direct contacts between the Warsaw Pact and NATO headquarters and their commanders to the eventual dismantling of the two alliances and their military structures. From the declaration of individual regional zones of confidence and security (the Jaruzelski Plan, the Jakes Plan, the plans suggested by the GDR and the SDPG, and so on) to the establishment of an all-European infrastructure of strategic stability — all this under effective verification, including on-site inspections.

At the conference of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact nations in Bucharest on July 7-8, 1989, the participants spoke up for the transfer of the relations with NATO into a non-confrontation channel and for constructive dialogue between the two alliances in the political and military spheres. They said that the time was ripe, too, for the transition of the continent onto a new level of security and co-operation.

The proposals of the Warsaw Treaty nations call for a business-like, unbiased approach. So, if they insist in the West of the continent and, notably, in the official NATO circles that they are taking seriously the idea of a ‘common European home’ and want to build it together with the East, it is unbecoming, without analysing everything, to try to dismiss the construction materials suggested by the other side as useless. Even more out of tune with time are the attempts to resort to the hackneyed allegations that “the policy and actions of the USSR in the military sphere have not changed”, or to the malicious myth that the entire European policy of Moscow boils down to attempts to split NATO and to alienate the US and its West European allies. Such suspicions are totally ungrounded.

Good-neighbourliness, partnership and equitable co-operation on a mutually beneficial basis — such is the key to the door leading to a more comfortable, perfect and the harmonious ‘common European home’. It would be proper to leave at its door not only the militarist armour but also the psychology, habits and mores of the days of confrontation and cold war which are confined to the formula “the worse for one, the better for the other”.

(*Sovetskaya Rossia*, August 9).