

Mikhail Gorbachev's article in *Pravda*

THE NOVEMBER 26 issue of *Pravda* carries an article by Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev entitled *The Socialist Idea and Revolutionary Perestroika* which synthesizes and develops the ideas which he set out in a number of recent speeches.

In the article's first section subtitled *Where Are We Going? The Meaning and Purpose of Perestroika*, the Soviet President writes that "the theoretical work of the Party after April 1985 has become a series of stages in the cognition of ourselves and in drawing closer to an adequate understanding of topical and strategic goals of perestroika."

"Some people try to reproach us that we have no clear-cut detailed plan to realise the concept of perestroika," Gorbachev observes.

"One can hardly agree with the way the question is put," he points out. "I believe that we would have made a theoretical error if we began to impose ready-made schemes upon society again or tried to squeeze actual life into schemes. This was the characteristic feature of Stalinism with which we have parted ways."

"We act according to Lenin. To act according to Lenin means to study how the future grows out of the present-day reality and to map out our plans accordingly."

In this transitional period, which is revolutionary in its very essence, heterogeneous elements and factors combine, intertwine and interact," Gorbachev points out.

"A new quality of social being and a new aspect of socialism are crystalizing in the competition of various economic and social forms, institutions and ideological trends. The renewal of developing socialism is a process which goes beyond the turn of the century."

In the article's second section dealing with matters pertaining to Marxism-Leninism and the theory of socialism, Gorbachev writes that "opinions are now being voiced increasingly often that the socialist idea is an artificial abstract construction and therefore is devoid of future, and that the theory of Marxism that expressed and substantiated it has not justified itself because it is responsible for the crisis state of our society."

In this connection the author points out that "the founders of Marxism never engaged in inventing specific forms and mechanisms for the development of a new society. They developed the socialist idea, relying on actual social life and the practice of the revolutionary working class movement of their time."

"It is clear that the founders of Marxism and the theory they created cannot bear responsibility for the deformations of socialism over the years of the personality cult and stagnation and for the erroneous actions of some or other political figures. And not only because a century long period separates the emergence of the theory and those events but also due to the substance of the matter.

"There is a world experience of socialism on which we can rely in determining the goals of our development," the author emphasises.

"We now take a wider, deeper and more realistic view of socialism than in the recent past. We view it as a world process in which, along with the socialist countries with different stages of socio-economic and political development, there are also various currents of the socialist thought in the rest of the world and some social movements different in their composition and motivation."

"Of everlasting importance is the fact that Marxism, developing the ideas of socialism, represented socialism as the natural product of the progress of civilisation and of the historical creative endeavour of the people," Gorbachev stresses.

"This manifested Marxism's scientific approach to the substantiation of a new society. In order to maintain this approach, it is of importance to bear in mind that it has not been given once and for all."

"As we delve deeper into the essence of our own history, it becomes increasingly clear that the October Revolution was not an error - and not only because a realistic alternative to it was by no means a bourgeois democratic republic, as some people try to make us believe now, but an anarchic mutiny, a bloody dictatorship of the military and the establishment of a reactionary anti-popular regime," Gorbachev writes in the article's third section subheaded *The Ideas of Socialism and Socialist Practice*.

"Neither is there any doubt that the October Revolution was not a fortuity but an epoch-making breakthrough into the future, a bid for a solution to social problems in the interests of the people and for the creation of social conditions for higher material and spiritual progress of for drawing the entire mass of the working people into the process of conscientious social creative work."

In the article's fourth, largest section headlined *New Aspect of Socialism* the Soviet President approaches the fundamental question asked at the beginning of the article: "Where are we going? What meaning should be put into the notion of a new quality of society and new aspect of socialism?"

"When the question is put in this way," Gorbachev writes, "notions of a new aspect of socialism form naturally in the process of identifying the theoretically comprehending the basic requirements and interests of people nowadays. On this basis it is possible to work out goals and programmes adequate to the present-day reality but at the same time oriented towards the future."

"A special role in the new social organism belongs to the Communist Party which is called upon to be the political vanguard of Soviet society. The destiny of perestroika and, it means, the attainment of a qualitatively new state of society and a new aspect of socialism depends on the Party's activities immensely if not decisively," Gorbachev emphasises.

Getting rid of day-to-day administrative and managerial functions, the Party is now turning into the centre for the elaboration of political and ideological platforms recommended to society and the state in the shape of its elective bodies. Such a change of the Party's functions determines anew its place in the political system as the ideological, political and ethi-

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Mikhail Gorbachev starts his visit to Italy today

"ITALY and the Soviet Union have approached a milestone. We need to sum up the results of our relations. Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to Italy offers an excellent opportunity for this and for determining the tendencies of further relations between the two countries," Ferdinando Salleo, Italian Ambassador to the Soviet Union, said in Moscow on November 22 at a news conference devoted to Soviet-Italian relations.

The importance of the Soviet President's visit was also emphasised by Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Anatoli Adamishin, who participated in the news conference.

He noted the visit's important political aspect in terms of discussion about the international situation, European affairs and bilateral relations.

Italy is a long-standing partner of the Soviet Union, he said. New forms of co-operation, including joint ventures, are now being developed successfully.

In terms of economic co-operation, some 20

agreements are being prepared for signature. A number of large contracts, important to the Italian and Soviet economies, are being drafted. Among them is an agreement on Fiat's participation in the construction of a new autoworks in Yelabuga.

There are arrangements for other areas of interaction - light industry and the agri-industrial complex.

A very significant agreement on co-operation in the conversion of war industries to civilian production is in the offing, Adamishin said.

Asked about the composition of the Soviet delegation, Adamishin mentioned Alexander Yakovlev, a member of the Politburo and a Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, Chairman of the Council of Ministers Stepan Sitarian and the Mayor of Moscow Valeri Saikin.

Writers, scientists, artists, advisors to the Soviet Government and Party apparatus and Foreign Ministry specialists will go to Italy together with the Soviet President.

During his visit to Italy the Soviet President will, naturally, be accompanied by his wife.

Mikhail Gorbachev will give a news conference during the visit, planned for the last day of the visit, December 1, in Milan. □

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Mikhail Gorbachev and Polish Premier discuss mutual relations

PRESIDENT Mikhail Gorbachev received in the Kremlin on November 24 Polish Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki, in Moscow on an official visit.

The Soviet leader stressed in his welcoming remarks that in light of the immense changes that have lately occurred in Poland, it is especially important to deepen mutual understanding on fundamental issues of Soviet-Polish relations in order to ensure their further successful development.

The development of good-neighbourly relations with Poland is one of the constant strategic lines of Soviet foreign policy, Gorbachev said.

He observed that the similarity between Soviet perestroika and Polish renewal has been giving a powerful impetus to the development of Soviet-Polish links.

"We may have different views, our life experience differs, as do our world outlook and political orientations," Gorbachev said. "But the realisation of the most important fact that the Soviet Union and Poland are both interested in good-neighbourly relations creates a basis for mutual understanding on a broad range of issues."

Gorbachev said that the Soviet side is open for close interaction with the new Polish leadership

and with all Polish political forces, public and religious figures, trade unions and other democratic organisations.

Mazowiecki reaffirmed Poland's interest in promoting diverse co-operation with the USSR and expanding its social base.

They exchanged views on co-operation in the spheres of culture, science and human contacts.

Gorbachev observed that the philosophy of new thinking opens up new vistas for the consolidation of intellectual ties, for the mutual understanding between broad sections of the Polish and Soviet population and for the eradication of negative deposits left by history.

History cannot be remade, but lessons can and should be learned from it to preclude the repetition of things that marred relations between the two peoples in the past and to cherish and multiply all things valuable that unite them.

Mazowiecki expressed regret over the activity of extremist forces in Poland that are trying to tarnish Soviet-Polish relations. He said that recent incidents in the country were provocative in character and ran counter to Poland's interest.

Discussing the international situation, Gorbachev and Mazowiecki stated that positive political processes were gaining strength in Europe,

contributing to stronger security, greater trust and the development of international co-operation.

It is important that the major changes now occurring in Eastern Europe and the continent as a whole should be organically combined with the preservation of stability, the disruption of which could throw Europe many years back.

Gorbachev and Mazowiecki positively assessed statements by several Western leaders to the effect that they are not going to take advantage of the current situation to revive political confrontation.

At the same time they expressed serious concern about the revival of revenge-seeking sentiments in connection with known developments in the German Democratic Republic, which, if not curbed, could encourage encroachments on the post-war boundaries in Europe.

The head of the Polish Government reaffirmed that its Warsaw Treaty commitments meet Poland's vital national interests.

It was agreed that in the interests of stability it is important to develop constructive contacts between the Warsaw Treaty and NATO. These contacts will form an integral part of the all-European process and the construction of an all-European home in conditions of equilibrium and sufficient security. □

Nikolai Ryzhkov's remarks at reception for Polish Premier

SOVIET Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov favours a steady development and consolidation of co-operation between the Soviet Union and Poland both on a bilateral and multilateral basis.

The head of the Soviet Government was speaking at a dinner in honour of Polish Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki held in the Grand Kremlin Palace on November 24.

The Soviet Union attaches great importance to good-neighbourly relations with Poland and remains committed to the fundamental principles of equality, respect for sovereignty and non-interference in each other's internal affairs, principles of the freedom of choice and mutually beneficial co-operation, Ryzhkov said.

"We will continue to attach prime importance to the strict respect for territorial and political

realities that have been established in Europe as a result of the Second World War and post-war development, including the inviolability of the Polish borders.

"We favour a steady development and consolidation of co-operation with Poland in all spheres, both on a bilateral and multilateral basis, within the Warsaw Treaty Organisation and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA).

"Relations with fraternal Poland are not only a political issue but also a call of our heart.

"The Soviet Union duly assesses the recent statement by the Polish leaders that Poland seeks to develop all-round relations with the Soviet Union by relying on everything that unites us and removing from this path everything that hinders progress," the Soviet Prime Minister said.

"This approach will serve the interests of the

two countries and strengthen genuine friendship between our peoples."

Speaking about today's Soviet-Polish talks, Ryzhkov said that they reflected the joint aspiration to enhance the efficiency of bilateral co-operation.

The mutual understanding that has emerged is of great significance since the two countries are applying great efforts to handle large-scale economic problems.

The current stage of Soviet-Polish relations, Ryzhkov said, is organically connected with the processes of radical reforms in the USSR and socio-political changes in Eastern Europe.

He said that the USSR does not impose its recipes for reform on anyone and respects the right of each nation to a free choice. It is convinced about the vital strength, immense political potential and historic progressiveness of socialism that is now acquiring a new image.

In conclusion Ryzhkov highly assessed the level of Soviet-Polish interaction in the international arena and Poland's constructive foreign policy. □

(Continued from previous page)

cal vanguard of the people, Gorbachev writes.

"At the present complex stage, the interests of the consolidation of society and the concentration of all its sound forces on the accomplishment of the difficult tasks of perestroika prompt the advisability of keeping the one-party system," he points out.

"And in this case the Party will promote the development of pluralism, the emulation of opinions in society and the broadening of glasnost in the interests of democracy and the people. In the efforts to renew socialism the Party may not concede the initiative to either populist demagoguery, nationalist or chauvinistic currents or to the spontaneity of group interests."

"The socialism to which we advance during perestroika means a society based on an effective economy, on the highest achievements of science, technology and culture, and on the humanistic social structures.

"It means a society which has democratised all aspects of social life and has produced condi-

tions for active creative life and work of people," Gorbachev concludes.

"At the same time," the articles says, "many processes of renewing socialism are virtually processes which are common to the entire civilisation and which develop in this or that form on other social soil. Global problems common to everyone begin to occupy more and more room in mankind's life.

"All this gives ground to suppose that various social systems, while retaining their peculiarities, develop within the framework which to an increasing extent is limited by the priority of universal human values such as peace, security, freedom and the opportunity for every people to decide future.

"The world of socialism advances to the goals common to the whole of mankind within the framework of a single civilisation, without abandoning its own values and priorities, but increasingly developing and refining them along the road of revolutionary perestroika and the building of a genuinely human society on the principles of reason and humanism." □

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Soviet President's meeting with Brian Mulroney

ON November 21 Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev met Prime Minister Brian Mulroney of Canada. This meeting at the highest level at the time of Soviet perestroika is overdue when compared with similar contacts between the Soviet Union and other countries.

However, time has not been wasted. Opinions have been exchanged through other channels and the potential for co-operation continued accumulating during these years. The importance of this meeting in the Kremlin was also underlined by the entire course of present-day development.

Mulroney showed his deep interest in perestroika and his desire to gain an understanding of the problems involved in this process. He genuinely desires mutual understanding on major issues of international politics.

The two leaders agreed that personal contacts between the leaders of countries and governments are particularly important now. The formation of an atmosphere of trust between countries and peoples depends on such contacts.

"From this viewpoint," Gorbachev said, "the Canadian Prime Minister's visit to the Soviet Union is one of the events that is helping change the world situation with an eye to a better future."

"Any deep changes, and the more so, those in key regions of the world," he pointed out, "are accompanied by instability and difficulties. This is only natural. The most dangerous thing at such moments is that someone may get tempted to use them for their own selfish interests."

Gorbachev appreciated Mulroney's speech made the previous day at a government reception. It illustrated the similarity of the philosophical and political approaches taken by the leadership of the two countries to world affairs and to the tasks that have arisen before the international community.

The importance attributed to Soviet-Canadian interaction and co-operation manifested itself in the large number of important agreements and other documents signed by the two governments these days. In addition, the Canadian Prime Minister is accompanied by more than two hundred businessmen who are prepared for specific joint work with Soviet enterprises.

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The Soviet-Canadian declaration, bearing the signatures of the two leaders, politically seals the achieved level of co-operation. In content the declaration is a document of international importance adequate to this crucial stage in world development.

Mulroney was genuinely interested in everything taking place in the Soviet Union. He sought ways to find out for himself and from the Western perspective in general the importance of the phenomenon of perestroika for the destiny of the international community in the near and distant future.

Gorbachev spoke frankly about the complex problems being tackled in the economic, political, and cultural spheres. He spoke particularly about reshaping a public consciousness that is agonisingly overcoming habits and stereotypes that have been taking root for decades.

A generalised conclusion drawn from what has happened over these years is that the country will never turn backwards. It has come to realise the need for radical changes and will change. In terms of the irreversibility of the process, the "task has already been accomplished," although lots of difficulties and every kind of problem lie ahead.

In answer to Mulroney's question about the future of the Soviet federation, Gorbachev voiced the conviction that a renewal of this form of the Soviet Union's existence was brought forth by objective conditions.

"Serious and keen discussions are under way. Both separatist and extremist ideas and calls for secession from the USSR are being mixed into them.

"However, those are either deliberate speculations on the past, the lack of understanding what misfortunes and dangers would lie in the path of peoples if they find themselves outside this great country, or the result of unwarranted doubts that the matter really concerns the establishment of a federative state.

"This is a very delicate process involving ethnic sentiments, the destiny of the country and, naturally, the future of our entire perestroika. Therefore, any provocative interference from outside in this purely internal affair of ours is utterly intolerable."

The problems of understanding the essence of the processes and non-interference in them were also discussed in connection with deep changes taking place in Eastern Europe.

The Soviet Union regards them in the spirit of new thinking, with interest, and is well-disposed to them. After all they bring the peoples closer together, promote accord, and assert an atmosphere of the balance of interests and free choice in international relations. This is the way to a lasting peaceful period.

Gorbachev spoke of the diversity of the forms of development of any social system as a natural and objective law. To build a society according to one model, even if this is a one-type social system, is, as experience has shown, a dangerous path leading to an impasse.

Every society should ripen for radical changes and every people determines itself what it needs and where and how it should go. And this should be respected. Otherwise there will be no sound international relations.

As to European events, most importantly, the Helsinki Process should be preserved and deepened, Gorbachev emphasised. A disruption of its principles should be prevented and it should be enriched with new ideas and move towards Helsinki-2 and in the direction of a 'common European home'.

The existing political and military-political institutions can and must operate within the framework of the Helsinki Process. One should

look for mutual understanding and readjust according to challenges of our time, promoting headway towards a new Europe.

To speed up events is tantamount to attempting to feed European with unripe fruit and poison everyone. Realities cannot be rushed. The East and West should go through adaptation and not to leap-frog stages. This threatens chaos.

Besides, Gorbachev said, it would not be bad for the West to moderate its presumption and give up the idea that only the socialist world should change. Otherwise there would be no drawing closer together.

Prospects and possibilities for integrating the socialist economy into the present-day world economic system were discussed in principle. In this connection Mulroney touched upon the question of Western 'aid'.

"We are ready for open, intensive and most diverse economic exchanges and appropriate interdependence — with one principled restriction ruling out attempts at using this for political purposes or influencing the political decisions of sovereign countries," Gorbachev emphasised.

Arctic problems were discussed both from the viewpoint of security and military detente in the light of the Murmansk initiatives and from the viewpoint of ecology. The two leaders agreed that the foreign ministries should arrange consultations on the entire spectrum of these problems.

Gorbachev reaffirmed the positive attitude to the idea of 'open skies' as one of the ways to build confidence. "In connection with the forthcoming conference in Canada on this subject, everything must be well prepared," he said.

Many other topical matters were also touched upon during the long and detailed friendly conversation.

In conclusion Gorbachev expressed satisfaction that in the person of the Prime Minister of Canada he found an interlocutor who is well aware of the importance of the great changes taking place now and who is ready to view the problems within the context of the current crucial period. We value good and productive relations with Canada, he added. □

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV

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Soviet-Canadian business council inaugurated

A NEW impetus has been given to commercial and economic ties between the Soviet Union and Canada: basic instruments of the Canada-USSR Business Council were signed in Moscow on November 22. Nikolai Ryzhkov, Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers and Brian Mulroney, Canadian Prime Minister officiated at the inaugural meeting of the Canada-USSR Business Council.

The tasks of the council include the broadening of business co-operation and trade between the USSR and Canada, development of legal contacts, the rendering of assistance to the business circles of the two countries in collecting commercial information, holding seminars and exhibitions and assistance to them in coping with problems which might arise.

The Canada-USSR Business Council will be registered as a Canadian corporation with the Central Office of Toronto, Canada, and the Mission in Moscow. Both offices will be open by the end of the first quarter of 1990.

In his speech at the inaugural meeting of the Canada-USSR Business Council Ryzhkov said

that Soviet-Canadian negotiations in Moscow are a landmark in relations between the two countries opening horizons of dynamic co-operation oriented at the future.

This is demonstrated by a set of inter-governmental agreements signed during the visit. They comprise virtually every area of bilateral interaction.

"Therefore we have every reason to believe that the infrastructure of Soviet-Canadian co-operation exists in its main outlines," Ryzhkov said.

"The foundation of the Canada-USSR Business Council reflects new trends in world economic relations, is the manifestation of growing tendencies for their democratisation and removal of everything that hampers their free development, Ryzhkov went on.

"We pin our hopes on such processes for the assertion of new partnership not only in politics, but also in economics," he continued.

"We have as yet been unable to make Soviet-Canadian commercial and economic relations commensurate with the vast potentials of our nations, with their striving for rapprochement," Ryzhkov noted.

"One of the reasons was that government bodies quite often took too much on themselves

seeking to decide literally everything and have not been creating conditions for the initiative of enterprises and organisations.

"In the process of perestroika we see our main task in creating a sort of most favoured treatment for all who are inclined to mutually advantageous co-operation — firms and amalgamation, enterprises and co-operatives," Ryzhkov said.

Brian Mulroney in his speech noted that "East-West relations are at their most promising point since the war. And Canada-Soviet relations are poised to make a new beginning."

"First, there is great scope for co-operation between Canada and the USSR to help make the international system work effectively," Mulroney said.

As regards the economic relationship between Canada and the USSR the Canadian Prime Minister emphasised that it has been a relatively modest one.

"The agreements we signed earlier this week, particularly if they are supported by further liberalisation of Soviet investment relations and, ultimately, by a fully convertible rouble, will provide a solid basis for expanded economic activity between our two countries," Mulroney said. □

Soviet and Canadian Foreign Ministers converse

SOVIET Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze on November 22 continued his talks with the Canadian Foreign Minister Joe Clark.

The ministers noted the importance for Soviet-Canadian relations of the joint political declaration signed by Mikhail Gorbachev and Brian Mulroney on November 21.

The declaration lays down the basis for the further development of relations between the two countries.

The ministers held a specific and business-like discussion of international problems, such as the present situation with regard to a Middle East settlement, including the Lebanon problem, and settlements around Cambodia and Afghanistan.

The two examined in sufficient detail some key aspects of the present situation in the Asia-Pacific region. They stated mutual readiness to seek just solutions to the continuing conflict situations, taking into account the interests of all the parties involved.

Shevardnadze presented the Soviet side's approaches to such solutions and stressed that the new thinking in world affairs, gathering momentum of late, reveals practical opportunities for the settlement of problems, including such intractable ones as the Middle East.

For his part, Joe Clark described the Canadian positions which in some cases are close to, or consonant with, Soviet approaches. The ministers agreed to continue and intensify the dialogue on world problems at all levels.

Among other things, they agreed to hold another round of opinion exchanges on regional questions at the level of experts and at the level of ministers in February 1990.

Shevardnadze and Clark paid much attention to the development and deepening of the two countries' co-operation on matters of the Arctic which, as the Soviet minister emphasised, must eventually become a zone of peace, confidence and reduce military activity.

They continued their conversation on European problems taking into account the major changes underway on the continent.

They also subjected to detailed scrutiny the key aspects of bilateral co-operation in different fields, as well as some humanitarian questions of interest to either of the sides.

Shevardnadze and Clark found the discussions held useful and said they favour improving the mechanism and broadening the scope of the bilateral political dialogue.

They agreed to meet on a regular basis and to exchange messages on the whole range of issues of the Soviet-Canadian agenda and the world situation. □

Afghan President gives interview to Soviet television

"THE predictions that the Afghan Government would fall within days or weeks following the Soviet troop withdrawal on February 15, 1989 were doomed to failure right from the beginning, because they did not take into account the real situation in Afghan society," Afghan President Najibullah said in an interview with Soviet television.

He said that a strong political, economic, social and military system set up in Afghanistan over the past decade, people's desire to defend themselves independently against the foreign aggression which started after the Soviet withdrawal; the humane policy of national reconciliation which made many counterrevolutionaries either withdraw from action or at least give up their militant position had enabled the Afghan Government to put up resistance.

As for Afghanistan's attitude towards an Afghan settlement, it has always favoured a political settlement, has drawn up its own plan, or a peace programme and the mechanism of its implementation. The Afghan Government and the armed opposition are continuing contacts and talks at different levels, in and outside Afghanistan. Some has already produced results.

"We," Najibullah went on to say, "exerted a great deal of efforts to release Soviet soldiers imprisoned by the Afghan opposition. We will involve the governments of many countries, charity institutions, international, political and public organisations as well as some political figures in this campaign . . . As previously, we are ready to speed up negotiations to exchange prisoners of war and release Soviet POWs. But, much will depend on the other side and its readiness to continue the talks and advance reasonable proposals. We hope that we will succeed in this work," Najibullah said.

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Shevardnadze on visit of Canadian Prime Minister

SOVIET Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze considered relations between the Soviet Union and Canada over recent years to be ascending, not without difficulties, but consistently, to a landmark beyond which new vistas of co-operation will open.

In an interview given to the newspaper *Izvestia* on November 23 he emphasised that the Soviet-Canadian talks held in Moscow have been such a landmark. Their political peak was the conversation between Mikhail Gorbachev and Brian Mulroney.

Shevardnadze holds that the closeness of the main national interests of the Soviet Union and Canada stems, among other things, from the similarity of the two countries' approaches to the assessment of the present crucial stage of world development and from their striving to consolidate the current turn from confrontation and ideological intolerance to the establishment of a broad and mutually advantageous co-operation between East and West and among all countries.

"It is characteristic that the Soviet Union's concept of new political thinking and the Cana-

dian concept of constructive internationalism are consonant in a philosophical aspect and in many specific manifestations," Shevardnadze said.

The Soviet Foreign Minister said that the Soviet-Canadian political declaration signed during the Canadian Prime Minister's visit was an intellectual and political breakthrough to a new inter-dependent world, that left behind the encrustations of the cold war and is confident about the future.

"A document of such a scale and importance could appear only in conditions of perestroika in the Soviet Union and fundamental changes in the world around us," the Soviet Minister said.

Regarding economic interaction between the USSR and Canada, which came up for discussion during the talks, Shevardnadze said: "We made it plain that it is not a question of 'aid' from the West, but that it would be equally advantageous for us and our partners to use new opportunities created by perestroika for vigorous development of economic relations. In this respect the Canadian leaders show commendable vision and assist by words and actions the involvement of the Soviet economy in the present-day world economic system."

The minister said that agreements worth nearly one billion dollars were concluded in the five days of the visit, and that the number of joint ventures set up virtually doubled to reach nearly 50.

In contrast to some Western countries, Canadian business is strongly backed by the government, which was, specifically, reflected in the signing of an intergovernmental agreement on the encouragement and mutual protection of capital investments.

The Arctic aspect of security held a special place in the dialogue with Canada on disarmament, Shevardnadze said. "The Arctic is our common umbrella," he went on.

The Soviet Union consistently declares for turning the Arctic into a zone of peace, free from nuclear weapons, for the lowering of the military activity in the region.

"We are prepared to state that Soviet submarines do not enter the waters of the Canadian archipelago. Besides that, we would be prepared to agree with the United States and other countries possessing strategic aviation on restricting the areas for training flights of aircraft capable of delivery of nuclear weapons," Shevardnadze said. □

Gerasimov comments on possible US troop reduction in Europe

THE Soviet Union has noted the *New York Times*' report that the United States is considering more drastic reductions of its troops in Europe than previously planned, Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman Gennadi Gerasimov told a briefing in Moscow on November 24.

He pointed out that this step in the correct direction would be duly assessed.

Gerasimov recalled that the Soviet Union is already carrying out large-scale unilateral cuts of its armed forces.

As of November 1, 1989, three armoured divisions and one air force regiment had been withdrawn from the territory of Warsaw Treaty member countries.

A total of more than 50,000 men, 3,118 tanks, 768 field-guns and 351 planes have been pulled out of Europe and Mongolia. The overall numerical strength of the Soviet Armed Forces has been reduced by 235,500 men.

"Unilateral steps to reduce the armed forces undoubtedly correspond to the spirit of the times and will contribute to reaching the earliest possible accord in Vienna at the talks on conventional armed forces," Gerasimov said.

"This accord would make an invaluable contribution to safeguarding European security in conditions of peace and stability and to the creation of more favourable conditions for building an all-European." □

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The Afghan President said that socio-economic development is vitally important for any country, especially for a country, like Afghanistan, which has sustained the horrors of war and whose national economy has suffered colossal material and financial damage. One has to deal with economic matters even during the war. Wars end, but it takes much time for a society to develop its economy, Najibullah said. □

(Moscow, November 23, TASS)

Eduard Shevardnadze on ecology and diplomacy

A NUCLEAR-FREE and non-violent world will be impossible unless its ecological purity is ensured, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze wrote in the weekly *Literaturnaya Gazeta* on November 22.

The minister said that not long ago diplomacy and ecology seemed to be separated by an immense distance. Before the eyes of one generation that distance has practically disappeared.

We know today that man's economic activity, or industrialisation, can produce forces and phenomena with a destructive potential comparable to a nuclear fall-out, if it is carried out with no regard for natural factors.

Even an approximate estimate shows that if current trends hold, the inhabitants of Earth will face the threat of breathing poisoned air and drinking poisoned water, of a worsening of global climate, irreversible pollution of the oceans, the destruction of the ozone layer, deforestation and desertification.

"One conclusion presents itself: the picture of mankind's gradual demise under the influence of negative ecological factors, of its own doing, is no more attractive than the vision of what would await the planet in the event of a thermonuclear conflict. This means that ecology is crucial to mankind's survival, as are disarmament, the settlement of regional conflicts and elimination of economic backwardness.

The author deals in the article with theoretical, judicial, organisational, economic, financial, social and other aspects of the problem.

"Today we have grounds to speak about the merging of politics and ecology into a single discipline, political ecology," Shevardnadze points out. New political thinking and the corresponding mode of operation, as the world's interdependence grows, have brought these spheres closer together. They have enhanced the awareness of the fact that curing the Earth's illnesses demands urgent worldwide solutions at the highest political level, the true internationalisation of the efforts of states.

"Diplomacy is an inalienable part of a state's political activity and, consequently, constitutes a major component of the political ecological complex. In world affairs, political ecology finds its practical expression in the concept of ecological safety as one of the components of universal security.

"Ecological safety means an interstate relationship that ensures the preservation, rational utilisation and reproduction of the environment in order to promote the stable and safe development of all states and to foster favourable conditions for every man.

"Ecological safety envisages a system of normative, organisational, economic and production measures taken in the framework of large-scale international co-operation and on the basis of international law."

A conference on the environment and development in 1992 is being elaborated at the current session of the UN General Assembly. It will be a milestone in international co-operation in nature conservation. As is known, the USSR proposed to hold it at the level of heads of state and government. The conference demands the most elaborate and comprehensive preparation. Not much time remains. □

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Soviet Foreign Minister on results of elections in Namibia

"THE Namibian people have exercised their right to free choice, and made this choice in favour of the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), which has led the struggle for Namibia's independence over the years," Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze said in an interview published by the weekly *New Times* on November 22.

The very fact that truly democratic and honest elections were conducted is of fundamental importance, Shevardnadze said.

"While congratulating the Namibian people and its vanguard, SWAPO, and acknowledging the efforts of the United Nations, the Organisation of African Unity and the frontline states, we should also commend the stand of South Africa," he said.

"South Africa has made this important initial step towards its return to the international community, even though it was not an easy step to take," he said.

Gratitude should be expressed to United Nations personnel, to the people in blue berets, who are now working in Namibia and guaran-

teeing its freedom and independence.

Shevardnadze emphasised in particular the contribution of UN Secretary General Perez de Cuellar and his special representative in Namibia Martti Ahtisaari. This major operation of the UN has demonstrated the United Nations' vast peace-making possibilities.

The Soviet Union's participation in the effort towards Namibia's decolonisation has always been many-faceted, the Soviet Foreign Minister said. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, the Soviet Union participated in all decisions related to Namibia.

Soviet representatives together with Americans now work on a joint commission for observing the settlement in the south west of Africa. Representatives from Angola, Cuba and South Africa are also on the commission.

The south of Africa is now living through a crucial moment in its history: conditions have been created that encourage the giving up of military confrontation and that provide for a political settlement of the Angolan conflict and for the normalisation of the situation in Mozambique.

New political thinking is taking root in the region, and national priorities and approaches to regional security are being drastically reviewed.

The emergence of the sovereign democratic Namibia and the establishment of peace and stability in Namibia will radically improve the situation in the south of Africa.

It is naive to think that everything will proceed smoothly. Much will depend on the conduct of the South African Government, on its readiness to refrain from the policy of aggression and interference in internal affairs of neighbouring countries as a means to ensure its own interests.

Namibia's decolonisation has always been linked to the problem of apartheid, Shevardnadze said. The apartheid policies in South Africa. A comprehensive settlement is impossible without the elimination of apartheid.

As long as apartheid exists, there will be a conflict situation in the region. The opposition is also true, Shevardnadze said.

He said he has no doubt that South Africa is following the events in Namibia closely and is looking for answers to questions, without which there can be no peace in South Africa also.

"One would like to believe that all South Africans, whites and blacks alike, will be able to feel equally free and secure in a truly democratic state built on the principles of a non-radical society," Shevardnadze said. □

Soviet-Polish Communique summary

THE negotiations held during the official visit to the Soviet Union by Polish Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki reflected the will and determination of the peoples of the Soviet Union and Poland to continue to develop and strengthen friendship and co-operation between the two countries on the principles of good-neighbourliness, equality, confidence and mutual advantage. This is said in a Soviet-Polish communique on the results of the visit of the Polish Prime Minister. The communique was published in Moscow on November 27.

The communique says that the Soviet Union and Poland intend to continue building their relations of allies on the principles of mutual confidence, respect for the freedom of social and political choice, complete equality and non-

interference in each other's internal affairs.

The document expresses the intention of both countries to exert efforts to speed up the restructuring of the mechanism of multilateral co-operation in the framework of the council for mutual economic assistance.

The elucidation of complicated problems in the history of relations between the two countries, above all the Katyn problem, will help rid them of negative encrustations of the past and strengthen friendship between the Soviet and the Polish peoples, the communique says.

Confirming the coincidence of views on the developments in Europe and the world, the sides proclaimed the resolve of their countries to press for the strengthening of European and universal security, for arms reductions, the democratisation of inter-state relations on the basis of the right of nations to self-determination as well as the development of broad international co-operation.

Natural and historically substantiated processes taking place in European socialist countries are within the framework of democratisation and the exercise of the right of nations to free choice, the communique says.

Welcoming democratic transformations in the German Democratic Republic, the sides expressed the confidence that relations between the two German states based on mutual respect for sovereignty, for the realities that formed in Europe in the post-war period, on the observance of the principle of the inviolability of state frontiers are of utmost importance for the preservation of stability and security in Europe.

Assessing the course of East-West dialogue, the sides noted that the nascent turn to overcoming the confrontation created the conditions for a new peaceful stage of stable and predictable international development.

The communique expresses the confidence that the forthcoming meeting between Mikhail Gorbachev and George Bush will be of much importance for the positive development of the world situation. □

Soviet Foreign Minister on Soviet-Japanese relations

THE attention of the world mass media was attracted to the meeting of Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze and a group of Soviet and foreign women journalists in Moscow on November 18. In particular, the meeting dealt with the issue of Soviet-Japanese relations and Japanese claims to the South Kurile Islands.

Since some news organisations have given different interpretations of Shevardnadze's statement on that issue, a TASS diplomatic correspondent asked the USSR Foreign Ministry for a verbatim report of the meeting. According to the report, the minister made the following statement:

Our position is that these islands belong to us. What is the way out? One of the deputies (of the USSR Supreme Soviet) has proposed joint economic activity. An interesting idea. Incidentally, we propose to the Japanese to open joint ventures, maybe not giants in the beginning, but to open joint ventures on these islands, to jointly export. Such proposals have been made. No positive decision has been received yet.

And if these islands belong to us, then are there grounds to speak about transfer and return? There are no grounds.

Then the minister said: **We are for continuing dialogue, for solutions to promote the development of our relations with Japan, with this surprisingly interesting country, a country which has scored tremendous successes in all fields of life and with which we are building good-neighbourly relations.** □

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Soviet Parliament gives economic autonomy to Baltic republics

By TASS parliamentary correspondent:

THE Soviet Parliament on November 27 passed a law giving economic autonomy to the three Soviet Baltic republics – Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

In particular, the Baltic republics will be able, within the framework of Soviet law, to possess, utilise and dispose of land and other natural resources on their territory in the interests of the republic and the USSR, to regulate all sectors of the economy and to control the financial system and the activity of republican banks (except for USSR State Bank outlets).

The law establishes that enterprises and organisations of union subordination shall be put under republican subordination on agreement between the governments of the USSR and the republic. The union will retain authority over the facilities of the armed forces, oil and gas trunk lines and other facilities which have nationwide importance.

The parliament approved the first reading of the bill at its summer session and then submitted it for consideration by committees and commissions. On November 24, it was brought before the Supreme Soviet. The bill triggered such a keen debate (some even spoke about the pos-

sible "disintegration of the union") that Mikhail Gorbachev had to warn the deputies about the inadmissibility of preemptory speeches in parliament.

Presenting the document on November 27, which was finalised in the committees and commissions over the weekend, Soviet Deputy Prime Minister Leonid Abalkin said the experience of the Baltic republics would ease the transition to economic autonomy for all union republics, help establish a rational relationship between them and the union. The law also entails the complete responsibility of the republics for their own socio-economic development.

Despite the work of the conciliation commission, passions ran high in parliament. Many amendments were proposed which significantly changed the meaning of the document. It was proposed to hold a vote not on every article but on every paragraph.

In the end deputies agreed to trust the parliamentary committees and commissions and to vote for the bill as a whole. Only three government amendments were approved separately, which received the support of most deputies. That the bill passed by a margin of just one vote in the Soviet of the Union is a measure of the novelty of the bill (bills are voted on separately in the two chambers of the Soviet Parliament). □

Soviet Parliament adopts law on leasing

By TASS parliamentary correspondent:

IN WHAT is considered to be a resolute step towards overcoming excessive centralisation of the Soviet economy and loosening the state's grip, the national Parliament on November 23 adopted the principles of federal and republican legislation on leasing.

The law on leasing is the first legal act from the proposed package of fundamental legislation to form the basis of economic reform in the USSR.

The development of leasing, a new form of economic management in the Soviet Union, has been until now restrained by the absence of a corresponding legal basis and an officialdom that refused to give up its monopoly on enterprises.

The principles, to enter into force on January 1, 1990, envisage for the first time that all output produced on a lease basis belongs to the work collective involved. The work collective may buy out an enterprise it had leased from the state.

Leasing is allowed in all branches of the national economy. In contrast with the past, government agencies lose the right to 'veto' the transfer of state-owned property to lease-holders.

Contrary to the established parliamentary practice in keeping with which bills are first approved in the first reading and are adopted only after extra editing in committees and commissions, the bill on leasing was first discussed yesterday and adopted this morning.

"The principles of legislation on leasing is the first real step towards the transfer of economic authority to work collectives," said Sergei

Alexeyev, Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee for Legislation.

"Leasing will lead to the formation of commodity-market relations and will make it possible to change the economic situation in the country for the better as early as next year," Alexeyev said.

He pointed out that the law contains firm guarantees of the rights of lease-holders and totally excludes the possibility of 'expropriation' in the future.

It says that any changes in legislation would not affect the status of the lease-holder throughout the period of a lease contract.

In defining that all products become the property of the people working under a lease contract, the law allows the workers to be genuinely interested in the results of their work, stressed Pavel Bunich, a leading Soviet economist.

During debate, many deputies remarked that the principles should be put into effect along with a system of taxation of lease-contract enterprises.

In this connection the USSR Council of Ministers was assigned the task to adopt by the beginning of next year a temporary ordinance on payments by lease-contract enterprises into the budget and to submit a corresponding bill to Parliament before February 1, 1990.

Commenting on the new legislative act, Valentin Vologzhin, Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Economic Reform, said that it creates equal opportunities for starting work in the new economic conditions for all enterprises, including those whose financial position is now unsatisfactory.

The principles of legislation on leasing will be of special importance for increasing the efficiency of the country's agriculture. □

At the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee

THE results of a recent all-union students' forum in Moscow were discussed at the November 23 meeting of the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee.

It was noted that the forum became an important socio-political event in the country and in the life of young people. The overwhelming majority of forum delegates supported the Party's policy of comprehensive renewal of socialism. The students' desire to take an active part in the country's socio-political life and in education reform was manifested. The Politburo decided to include the main principles of the Party's Youth Programme in Modern Conditions in the Party platform for the 28th Congress.

The Politburo also considered the results of the CPSU Central Committee meeting of senior Party and government officials from autonomous republics, territories and regions of the Russian Federation, which reviewed preparations for elections to republican and local bodies of government.

It heard a report on Mikhail Gorbachev's conversations and the meetings of the USSR Supreme Soviet members Anatoly Lukyanov, Yevgeni Primakov and Rafik Nishanov with FRG Bundestag President Rita Suessmuth and the Chairman of the French National Assembly Laurent Fabius. It was found useful to develop inter-parliamentary contacts and make them more dynamic and politically substantive.

The Politburo considered the results of a Prague meeting of secretaries of central committees of fraternal parties of CMEA member countries on economic issues and approved the activity of the CPSU delegation.

It also heard Andrei Girenko's report on the meeting between the CPSU delegation and Julio Anguita, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Spain, during its stay in that country. □

Soviet Parliament declaration

"THE USSR Supreme Soviet denounces the practice of violent deportations of entire ethnic groups as the gravest crime contradicting the basis of the international law and the humanistic nature of socialism," the Soviet Parliament said in its declaration published in *Pravda* on November 24.

The declaration recognises as illegal and criminal the deportation of some ethnic groups in the Soviet Union and stresses the need to ensure their rights.

The document described as barbaric Stalin's deportation of the Balkars, Ingushes, Kalmyks, Karachais, Crimean Tatars, Germans, Meskhetian Turks and Chechens from their native lands during World War II.

The policy of violent resettlement also affected Soviet Koreans, Greeks, Kurds and other ethnic groups.

The declaration guarantees that "the violation of human rights and norms of humanity at a state level will never reoccur in this country." □

Alexander Borisov

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Soviet-Italian trade and economic relations

by Vladimir Kirillov, TASS correspondent:

SOVIET leader Mikhail Gorbachev will soon begin his official visit to Italy. There is little doubt that much attention will be given to trade and economic relations between the two countries.

A little over 40 years have passed since the day the USSR and Italy signed the Treaty on Trade and Navigation, granting each other most favoured nation status. This document and other inter-government agreements in foreign economic relations and scientific and technical co-operation have created real conditions for mutual interest in developing trade.

This process has continued to develop but not without its up and downs, sometimes with a big imbalance in trade.

Italy has always been a major trading partner of the USSR among industrialised Western countries.

In 1988 Italy was the fourth biggest Soviet trade partner after West Germany, Finland and Japan, with the trade turnover being slightly more than three billion roubles.

According to rough estimates this year too

should see a similar volume of bilateral trade between the two countries.

Energy carriers – oil, petroproducts and gas – make up nearly four-fifths of Soviet supplies. At the same time machines and equipment are responsible for less than two per cent of Soviet exports to Italy.

Quantitative limitations and the Italian practice of licensing Soviet imports make deliveries of Soviet equipment more difficult.

However, it is also worth mentioning the low competitiveness of many Soviet goods, drawbacks with supplies of spares, organisation of after-sale servicing and the isolation of Soviet producers from foreign markets.

The biggest item of Soviet imports is machinery and equipment: in 1988 they accounted for 697 million roubles out of the total import of 1,343 million. The USSR also buys complete systems.

Soviet organisations maintain business relations with more than 1,000 Italian firms. However, large Italian companies, including ENI, Finsider, Montedison, Fiat, Pirelli, Donieli and Olivetti, account for the main part of the trade turnover.

Relations with them are often based on long-term agreements (ENI, Finsider and Montedison). Italian partners are greatly interested in

joint enterprises: by mid-November the USSR registered 68 joint ventures in the light, leather and food industries, petrochemistry, electronics, medicine and some other spheres.

In Italy there are 10 Soviet-Italian mixed joint stock societies, including Stanitaliana, Nafta and Fata-Promo engineering.

Nevertheless, if we look at the share of each country in each other's trade turnover – two per cent for the USSR and 2.3 per cent for Italy – and compare them with the present-day realities of the international division of labour, it will be clear: speedy Mercury has much work to do in Soviet-Italian trade.

On the eve of Gorbachev's visit to Italy, the two countries were engaged in vigorous work to draft various documents concerning the expansion of economic ties. A long-term programme for the development of economic, industrial and technical co-operation can be an important element of these relations.

The mutual protection of investments is assuming special importance in connection with new forms of foreign economic relations.

The Soviet business community believes that Gorbachev's forthcoming visit to Italy will substantially influence the development of mutually advantageous economic co-operation between the two countries. □

General Chervov comments on Vienna talks

THE Soviet Union believes that naval armed forces should be included in the Vienna talks on confidence and security, according to a high-ranking Soviet Army official.

The Soviet delegation has again informed the negotiating sides about the Soviet position on the issue, Colonel-General Nikolai Chervov, Soviet General Staff department head, told TASS on November 24.

He characterised the talks as constructive and business-like, but said that the Warsaw Treaty and NATO were still divided on a number of issues.

The Soviet Union and other Warsaw Treaty member-countries want confidence-building measures to cover the army and the air forces and the navy in Europe and its surrounding seas, Chervov said.

The Soviet Union and its Warsaw Treaty allies support the introduction of limitations on the scope, intensity and length of military exercises for these armed services and effective verifica-

tion procedures.

The socialist countries specified working documents' provisions on notification regarding air forces and naval activities, the monitoring of air forces activities, reduction of extensive military actions, data exchanges about the army, air force and navy and programmes for the adoption of new types of weapons and hardware, Chervov said.

NATO proposals boil down to more data exchanges about the army and land-based aviation, types of their organisation, sites, and personnel and major types of weapons and hardware numbers, he said.

The proposals reveal NATO's one-sided and imbalanced approach to confidence-building measures and its desire to share data only about the army.

Naval confidence-building measures and verification become increasingly important with the onset of disarmament, Chervov emphasised. □

Amnesty for Soviet POWs

THE Soviet Parliament yesterday granted amnesty to former Soviet servicemen who committed crimes while serving in Afghanistan.

Guided by the principles of humanism, the resolution runs, the USSR Supreme Soviet frees these people from criminal responsibility for the crimes committed during military service in Afghanistan between December 1979 and February 1989.

At the same time people convicted by Soviet courts for such crimes are to be set free, and no criminal records are to be kept on those who have served their time.

Presenting the draft resolution to the deputies, Yuri Golik, member of the Parliament's Committee on Legislation, stressed that the amnesty also applies to people who are currently abroad. This provision takes into account proposals expressed by deputies during the elabora-

tion of the document.

The discussion mainly focused on the fourth article of the proposed draft, under which the amnesty did not apply to people who committed premeditated murder with aggravating circumstances. Many deputies argued that this provision could hamper the return of Soviet POWs to their homeland.

Among those who pressed for the exclusion of that article were Afghan war veterans, the Parliament's Committee for Youth, Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev and Academician Andrei Sakharov.

Guided by humanitarian considerations, the USSR Supreme Soviet agreed with these proposals and dropped the article from its resolution.

The Soviet Parliament's decision on the amnesty, which received an absolute majority of votes, takes effect on December 15, 1989. □

Leningrad Party chief's interview with Pravda

"IT IS time for us, communists, to take stock of our goals and thoroughly examine what is happening in our Party's 'house', Leningrad Party chief Boris Gidasov said in an interview with Pravda on November 28.

"We lack what was always the Bolsheviks' strong point – clear-cut programme targets and the ability to show clear prospects to the people," he said.

"We are resolutely breaking with the ideology of Stalinism and stagnation.

"But we are convinced – our banner has been and will be red and inscribed on it are the words: Lenin, October, Socialism. We will stop being ourselves if we renege upon our socialist values and allow crusading pseudo-democrats fool people by telling sweetish fairy-tales about 'people's capitalism', limitless democracy and non-partisan glasnost. Communists have definitely spoken against the denationalisation of the economy and legalisation of private property.

"A return to the past is impossible, except under the influence of extremist forces, and we must not allow that. I see no force, other than the Party, which can resist them."

Gidasov urged concrete and decisive moves to deal with the current situation.

These steps will measure our movement along the road of perestroika, he said. □

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