

Mikhail Gorbachev's speech at Kremlin reception for Najib

Here follows the full text of the speech made by Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, at a dinner held in the Kremlin on Friday, December 12, by the CPSU Central Committee and the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR in honour of Najib, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan:

Esteemed Comrade Najib,
Esteemed Afghan Friends,
Comrades,

I am happy to welcome here in Moscow Comrade Najib, the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, and the Afghan guests who have arrived together with him.

Your visit is not a routine event. It is taking place, one can say, at a crucial stage in the history of new Afghanistan. We see its importance for ourselves first of all in facilitating the building of an independent and non-aligned Afghanistan and the strengthening of its international positions. Today's talks allowed us to study together with you, in a comradely manner and profoundly, how best to help the Afghan people in overcoming the difficulties lying in this road.

It was in the 1921 Treaty between Russia and Afghanistan, one of the first diplomatic documents of such a type in the new epoch, that the fundamental principles of relations between these two such dissimilar states were put on record.

Today, after the victory of the national-democratic revolution in Afghanistan, these principles have become filled with new content and have acquired a still deeper meaning. They form the core of the Treaty of Friendship, Good-neighbourliness and Co-operation that was signed eight years ago, in December 1978.

The present of Soviet-Afghan relations means a high level of diverse ties between the CPSU and the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, between the governments, state and public organisations of our countries. The concrete results of this co-operation are embodied in the numerous jointly built projects in the Afghan economy, in the growing volume of mutual trade, in cultural and scientific ties, and in the training of skilled national personnel for Afghanistan.

Our attitude to Afghanistan stems organically from the course of the 27th CPSU Congress of consolidating solidarity with the newly independent countries which have embarked on the road of social progress.

It is in a complex and troubled situation that the Afghan people are entering their new life.

The undeclared war unleashed against them is not abating and the encroachments on the freedom of the Afghans and their lawful right to build their own society as applied to conditions existing at the end of the 20th century are not ceasing.

Bands of terrorists are still being sent into their territory. These terrorists are being supplied with arms in growing amounts and of increasing sophistication. Their ringleaders are feasted in Western capitals. Unlawful discussions of purely internal matters of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan are being forced on international organisations. A curtain closely woven out of lies and slander is being used in an attempt to conceal the truth about the new Afghanistan from the public of many countries.

But events in the country are developing not in the way that its enemies, the dark forces of reaction, would want. Understanding of the fact that the progress of the national-democratic revolution is in the interests of the people is gradually penetrating the hearts and minds of Afghans. The positive processes are continuing.

The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan has proclaimed a policy of national reconciliation. Its contours and prospects are beginning to take shape. Quite naturally we wish our Afghan friends success along this road, we

would like peace and calm to assert themselves in the neighbouring and friendly country as quickly as possible.

The process of political settlement around Afghanistan is going on. This process has its breakdowns, it happens that it marks time, but there are also moments that instil optimism. We hope that the goodwill of both sides and the efforts of the personal envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General, Diego Cordovez, will make it possible to achieve mutual understanding and decisive accords in the nearest future.

The USSR's resolve to assist in untying the knot that has been tightened around Afghanistan was stated at the 27th CPSU Congress. The Soviet Union takes an active stand in pursuing a political settlement and calls on all those who really have a relation to the Afghan problem to take part and co-operate in it. We will not abandon our southern neighbour in a difficult situation. This is a position of principle. We have no intention of leaving our troops for long in Afghanistan, which were sent there on the request of its government. And we have already confirmed this by the withdrawal of six regiments. I want to repeat once again: the withdrawal of troops can be expedited as soon as

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Soviet-Afghan talks

TALKS took place in Moscow on Friday between Mikhail Gorbachev and Najib, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, who is paying an official visit of friendship to the Soviet Union.

Mikhail Gorbachev and Najib exchanged views on a range of issues connected with the historic relations of good-neighbourliness between the USSR and Afghanistan. They voiced their complete satisfaction with their continuous and dynamic development and noted the existence of favourable opportunities for their furtherance in different fields.

Najib reaffirmed the determination of the People's Democratic Party and the Government of Afghanistan to conduct a constructive dialogue with political forces within and outside Afghanistan and to maintain and broaden contacts with all the neighbouring countries.

Mikhail Gorbachev and Najib discussed general political problems. The two leaders noted the special importance of close interaction by all countries, peoples and socio-political forces against the danger of war, against the aggressive designs of imperialism headed by the United States, and for asserting a system of all-embracing international security and mutually advantageous co-operation.

They stressed the need for determined and responsible actions by all states, big and small, irrespective of their social system, directed at resolutely stopping the arms race, preventing it from spreading to outer space, reducing military spending, and ensuring for all peoples reliable security and peaceful conditions for their social and economic development.

Najib stated full support for the Soviet programme for a nuclear-free world, for the bold and constructive stand taken by the Soviet leadership at the Soviet-American meeting in Reykjavik, and welcomed the results of the recent official friendly visit to India by the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee.

The Soviet side expressed full support for the efforts of the Afghan leadership directed at the speediest political settlement around Afghanistan. The sides expressed the conviction that at present real ways exist towards a speedy and fundamental normalisation of the situation around Afghanistan, which would create conditions for the return home of the limited contingent of Soviet troops staying in the DRA at the request of the Afghan Government. In that connection, the importance was pointed out of the recent return home of six Soviet regiments from Afghanistan.

The talks proceeded in a warm and cordial atmosphere. They were evidence of the full concurrence of views of the sides on all issues under discussion. □

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Mikhail Gorbachev's speech at reception for Yugoslav Communists

Here follows the full text of the speech made by Mikhail Gorbachev at the Kremlin dinner given by the CPSU Central Committee on December 10 in honour of a delegation from the League of Communists of Yugoslavia headed by Milanko Renovica, President of the Presidium of the LCY Central Committee:

Dear Comrade Renovica,
Dear Yugoslav Comrades,
Comrades,

I cordially welcome once again on behalf of the CPSU Central Committee the high-ranking delegation from the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and want to express satisfaction with the results of our talks.

The constructive stable character of Soviet-Yugoslav relations was highly assessed during the conversations.

Acting in strict compliance with the known principles of the documents of 1955 and 1956 and mutual arrangements, our countries maintain successful and mutually beneficial co-operation in the economy, conduct lively cultural exchanges and co-operate in many key directions of present-day international politics.

Regular contacts are maintained between the leadership of the CPSU and the LCY—and our meeting today is fresh evidence of that.

The Yugoslav comrades and we noted with satisfaction that the proximity of historical destinies and national spiritual cultures, the bonds of the concerted struggle against fascism—the fight for life—and the community of the goals of the development along the socialist path make up the reliable and firm foundation of Soviet-Yugoslav friendship.

We were unanimous that the further deepening of our co-operation in all spheres of public life fully meet the interests of both countries. Such is, one can say, the main outcome of the talks, allowing us to assess them as our common big success.

In this favourable political context we examined the state of economic ties and came to the conclusion that their development, the solution of existing problems in this area can be ensured along the lines of establishing extensive production, scientific and technological co-operation.

The Soviet Union and Yugoslavia possess rich

potentialities for that. The national economies of our countries have much that is complementary in character and that creates objective conditions for the development of co-operation and specialisation.

A great deal of work is being carried out in this direction within the framework of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance.

The implementation of the comprehensive programme for scientific and technological progress intended for the period until 2000 has been started.

Its implementation is helping to speed up the social and economic development of every fraternal country and reveal more fully the potential of socialism as a whole.

It must be noted that the Yugoslav comrades, too, came out in favour of introducing new, progressive and promising forms of economic co-operation.

Both sides constantly pay attention to links in the field of culture, along the lines of public organisations, creative unions, mass media bodies and tourist exchanges. There are undeniable accomplishments in all these major spheres of co-operation and contact between our peoples, but there are also considerable unused reserves. During the talks the sides expressed the mutual aspiration to move forward in all directions and agreed to issue corresponding instructions on this account.

Let me dwell on the question of exchanging the experience of social development.

Way back in the first post-October (Socialist Revolution of 1917) period, when the Soviet Union was the only socialist state, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin predicted that life would show immense diversity in the forms and methods of building a new society and that only a number of attempts, each of a unilateral character, would comprise the whole of socialism.

It is hard to overestimate the fundamental political importance of this thought of Lenin's for the process of the establishment and development of the world socialist system.

It follows from the recognition of the diversity

of the revolutionary process that no party has a certificate to the absolute truth.

It is only socio-historical practice which can be the chief arbiter in theory, and the results of socio-economic development and the actual consolidation of socialism the chief criterion.

We are convinced that the respectful, interested attitude of the fraternal parties to searches, to one another's experience and the exchange of this experience, the generalisation and use of all things valuable that are born of the creative activity of the peoples following the socialist path make it possible to constantly perfect the new social systems, to reveal more broadly its inexhaustible creative potentialities.

We stick to this approach with regard to Socialist Yugoslavia as well. We view with attention, without prejudice the experience of the Yugoslav comrades in socio-political development, in the solution of burning problems of the current stage in socialist construction.

In turn, we appreciate that the process of restructuring and renovating all spheres of socio-political and economic life in the Soviet Union is being positively assessed in Yugoslavia.

In handling this truly revolutionary, fundamental task, we take care not only about our national interests, we think not only of improving substantially the life of the Soviet people and of strengthening the might of our homeland.

Our Party is well aware of its internationalist duty, of the significance of the consistent implementation of the tasks advanced by the 27th CPSU Congress for the destinies of peace and socialism.

On the whole, the exchange of experience is becoming one of the most important and promising spheres of co-operation between our parties.

Comrades,

The exchange of views on world affairs held an important place in the conversations with the Yugoslav comrades. We are unanimous in the understanding that preventing nuclear

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SOVIET-YUGOSLAV COMMUNIQUE

THE Soviet Union and Yugoslavia have expressed concern over world tensions, especially the continuing arms race and the threat of its spread to outer space.

This has been underlined in a joint communiqué on the official friendly visit to the USSR by a delegation from the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, which ended on December 12.

The delegations from the CPSU and the LCY, led by Mikhail Gorbachev and Milanko Renovica, President of the Presidium of the LCY Central Committee, held talks during the visit.

The joint communiqué pointed to the need for immediate actions by all states, political and public forces in the struggle for universal disarmament, above all nuclear disarmament, and for detente and peaceful coexistence.

Reiterating their firm commitment to the all-

European process, the parties to the talks attached great importance to negotiations on substantial cuts in armed forces and conventional armament in Europe.

The creation of zones free from nuclear and chemical weapons in Europe and other continents would make a considerable contribution to strengthening peace.

The sides stressed the growing role of the Non-Aligned Movement as an independent global factor in international relations, in the struggle for peace, equality and mutual understanding, in the struggle against imperialism, colonialism, neocolonialism, apartheid, all forms of aggression, interference, domination and hegemony in the political and economic spheres, and in the endeavours to establish a new international economic order.

Expressing concern at the continuing tension southern Africa, in Asia and the Middle East and in Central America, Gorbachev and Renovica came out in favour of the immediate settlement

of conflicts by political means, by way of talks.

The sides expressed their resolve to promote friendship and co-operation between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, and enrich Soviet-Yugoslav relations with new content and new forms in the interests of the peoples of the two countries and the cause of peace and socialism.

Positively asserting the level of mutually beneficial co-operation in the trade, economic, scientific and technological spheres, Gorbachev and Renovica stressed their mutual interest in the further development of Soviet-Yugoslav economic ties, and in a concerted search for new possibilities to resolve emerging problems of balancing goods exchanges.

Renovica invited Gorbachev on behalf of the Presidium of the LCY Central Committee and the Collective Presidency of Yugoslavia to visit Yugoslavia on an official friendly visit in 1987. The invitation was accepted with gratitude. □

Mikhail Gorbachev receives Senator Hart

ON Monday Mikhail Gorbachev received in the Kremlin the American Senator Gary Hart.

The state and prospects of present-day politics were discussed in an informal and well-wishing atmosphere. The two discussed the causes of international tension, the arms race, regional conflicts, and the need for new thinking and for abandoning the old attitudes—that took centuries to form but are now no longer suitable—to relations with other states, including with scores of young states which are following their own road. Herein lies the critical point of achieving a realistic, reasonable policy that takes

into account one's own interests and those of others.

The USSR and the United States could do much in searching for a kind of international relations based on the recognition of the profound changes that have taken place in the world during the past 30 to 40 years, said Mikhail Gorbachev. The greatness of a state now, especially a big one, lies not in displaying its ability endlessly to build up and improve its military machine, not in pursuing the spectre of military superiority. It is necessary to search for ways of living together, not of consigning each other to the "ash heap of history".

At the Senator's request Mikhail Gorbachev told him what had really happened in Reykjavik, gave his assessment of the reaction to its results in NATO countries and confirmed the invariable Soviet position: talks with any administration on problems of ending the arms race have a future only if there is further advance from Reykjavik. It was possible to reach an accord there and today too it is possible to come to terms if what has already been achieved is not dismantled. Rejection of Reykjavik means rejection of the line for disarmament.

Anatoli Dobrynin, Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, took part in the conversation. □

USSR Supreme Soviet delegation visits USA

VIKTOR AFANASIEV, Editor-in-Chief of *Pravda*, headed a delegation from the USSR Supreme Soviet on a visit to the United States on December 10-13. The visit was at the invitation of the US Congress.

The delegation's visit ended with the conclusion of an agreement on hosting a series of "spacebridges"—television debates via satellite-TV hookups—between the Soviet Union and the United States.

The agreement provides for holding several joint television debates next year under the general title "New Ways of Thinking in the Space Age".

During the spacebridge TV programmes, Soviet and US parliamentarians will discuss vital issues of our times, ranging from disarmament to the environment.

Representative George Brown (Democrat, California) has described the agreement as an important first step. At a press conference in Washington he pointed out that the spacebridge

project opened up new horizons for contacts between the peoples of the two countries.

Claudine Schneider, a Republican member of the House of Representatives, has said that television bridges are a fine metaphor. She said it was essential to build such bridges, and not be busy setting up barriers to mutual understanding.

Thomas Downey, a member of the House of Representatives, quoted Albert Einstein, who once remarked that "everything has changed but our way of thinking". The Congressman pointed out in this connection that in our nuclear and space age, the need for new ways of thinking had become an urgent necessity.

He voiced the hope that the realisation of the joint spacebridge project would enable Americans to get to know more about the political system and about life in the Soviet Union.

Viktor Afanasiev emphasised the unique nature of the planned TV spacebridges.

"Exchanges of opinions of this kind between the parliamentarians of the two countries have not taken place before," he pointed out. "But the

main thing is for it to serve the cause of bringing the peoples of our two countries closer together, building confidence and improving mutual understanding."

However, even US congressmen admitted the existence of serious obstacles to this project in the United States.

According to Thomas Downey, there exists a wide gap between the potential TV audiences who will watch the telecasts in each of the countries.

"In the Soviet Union," said People's Artist of the USSR Deputy Kirill Lavrov, "interest in such programmes is immense. Soviet television always provides wide opportunities for airing such broadcasts."

Quite a different picture is observed in the United States, where television is controlled by private capital. And although Congressman George Brown promised that the American side would study every opportunity to organise large-scale broadcasting of "spacebridges", it is the US TV corporations that will still have the final say. □

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catastrophe is the most important task facing mankind.

This approach stems from the very nature of the socialist countries, from the fact that the peoples of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia suffered immense casualties during World War Two.

We are striving towards a lasting and fair peace based on respect for the rights of every people to independent development, based on mutually beneficial co-operation.

The Soviet-American meeting in Reykjavik offered a unique chance for burying the hatchet, that is, for ending the arms race and starting the abolition of nuclear weapons.

The militarist forces, however, have done everything to prevent a turn for detente, for disarmament.

The siren of the "crusade" against communism, silenced for a while, has been turned up to full capacity. It is being claimed that disarmament is impossible as long as the existing order and communist ideology remain in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

And this is being said by the people who accuse us communists of the intention of imposing our views on the rest of the world by force.

The US Administration is throwing into the wastepaper basket agreements and treaties designed to restrain the spiralling of the arms race.

Faithful to its commitments, the Soviet Union has not exceeded by a single unit the limit set by the SALT-2 Treaty, and has not conducted a single nuclear explosion since the introduction of

the moratorium. We are prepared to continue that path if the United States responds in kind. The point at issue is security of nations and this security can be built in the nuclear age only on the basis of reciprocity.

We hope that Washington officials will be able to weigh the possible implications of their actions in a responsible way. It seems to me that a weighty word can be said by US allies and other countries whose governments have welcomed the Soviet restraint in public on several occasions but dare not utter a word about America's lack of restraint in the field of the arms race.

Every cloud has a silver lining—the events following Reykjavik have enabled many people to see better who are truly in favour of peace and disarmament and who only pay lip-service to this subject while being unwilling to renounce the banking on nuclear weapons and on power politics.

I have already said and I want to repeat again: mankind is running short of time. If the arms race is not stopped today or tomorrow, if the door to its transfer into outer space is not shut, the world may encounter a baneful heightening of international tension and unpredictable consequences.

The situation is alarming and it calls for immediate actions. No one is now entitled to the position of onlooker, limiting one's activity to general calls for peace.

We not only recognise but also uphold the right of all states—big and small—to active participation in the solution of topical problems of the times.

The importance of that can be judged from the

fact that the success of the Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures in Europe was largely due to the constructive position of the neutral and non-aligned countries of the continent.

The USSR stands for the further growth of the role in world affairs of the authoritative force that is the Non-Aligned Movement, in which Yugoslavia has played such an outstanding part.

Today's meeting with the Yugoslav comrades and the recent visit to India demonstrated the consonance of our notions about ways of creating a nuclear-free world that would be safe for all.

This is the world that will make it possible to avert the threat of nuclear annihilation, will make it possible to concentrate the collective efforts of mankind on overcoming backwardness, eradicating hunger and illiteracy, resolving other global problems of the times and placing all achievements of scientific and technical genius at the service of humanitarian aims.

We are convinced that the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia will interact with ever greater friendship and efficiency in this direction.

In conclusion let me on behalf of our entire Party and the Soviet people wish the Yugoslav Communists, all peoples of Yugoslavia successful resolution of problems facing the country in keeping with the decisions of the 13th Congress of the LCY and advancement along the road of socialism.

Let friendship and co-operation between the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, between the fraternal peoples of our socialist countries strengthen and develop! □

Meeting of Political Bureau of CPSU Central Committee

AT its meeting last Thursday the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee heard a report from Mikhail Gorbachev on the CPSU delegation's talks with the delegation from the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY), which was led by Milanko Renovic, President of the Presidium of the LCY Central Committee.

It was pointed out that the talks had been of much importance for deepening mutual understanding and trust between the two parties.

Political prerequisites had been created for the further steady development of Soviet-Yugoslav relations, for their being enriched with up-to-date forms, and for the strengthening of co-operation between the Soviet Union and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the striving for a nuclear-free world and for the solution of other global problems facing mankind.

The Political Bureau considered the results of the talks between the Soviet leadership and Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland of Norway, Chairwoman of the Norwegian Labour Party.

It was pointed out that considerable mutual understanding on the main, most topical issues of disarmament and European security as well as on environmental protection matters had been revealed during the talks. The desire to develop traditional good-neighbourly relations and mutual trust between the USSR and Norway and to broaden co-operation between the CPSU and the Norwegian Labour Party was reaffirmed.

Viktor Nikonov's information on the results of his trip to the German Democratic Republic, connected with further development of co-operation between the agri-industrial sectors of the two countries, was heard at the meeting.

The Political Bureau discussed the course of work on a draft law of the USSR on socialist enterprise (amalgamation) which is being prepared in accordance with the guidelines of the 27th Congress of the Party.

It was pointed out at the meeting that the

passage of such a law would have exceptional importance for effecting deep-going reorganisation of the management system, all-round development of its democratic principles, enhancement of the socialist initiative and responsibility of work collectives, and for stimulation of the human factor.

Having considered the item on the course of the work to eliminate the aftermath of the breakdown at the Chernobyl nuclear power station, the Political Bureau pointed out that an important stage in the work had been completed, as a result of the selfless efforts of many work collectives and Soviet Army servicemen and a large amount of organisational and political work by Party and local government bodies, ministries and departments.

The putting into operation of the shielding structures on the damaged power unit as well as the restart of the first and second power units of the station had been ensured.

Some other matters pertaining to the country's domestic life as well as to the foreign policy activities of the Communist Party and the Soviet State were also discussed at the meeting. □

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV'S SPEECH AT KREMLIN RECEPTION FOR NAJIB

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a just settlement around Afghanistan is achieved.

Now it is up to the other side, first of all the American Administration. If it really wants a settlement it must start scaling down its interference in the internal affairs of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan.

But it appears that the attainment of national peace and accord in Afghanistan and the DRA's good-neighbourliness with neighbour countries does not suit Washington. While hypocritically lamenting the sufferings of the Afghan people they in Washington are at the same time doing everything to perpetuate these sufferings and hoping to make dubious political capital out of the continuing bloodshed. The aim is obvious—to obstruct the success of the talks and preserve tension in that entire area.

The US Administration's anti-Afghan, destructive line attunes with its general neo-globalist policy. This is a policy designed to perpetuate colonialism in present-day conditions. Among its methods are *diktat*, blackmail, and also armed intervention, bribery and covert operations to undermine and destabilise governments which have embarked on the path of independent development. These methods also include deception of the peoples who find themselves in its field of action, and systematic misinformation of the world public.

The basic rule of contemporary international politics should be unconditional recognition of the right of each people to their own social and political choice, respect for the independence of every state, and equality in all international affairs.

We will uphold that rule, that principle everywhere and in any situation. We are invariably guided by it also in our relations with Afghanistan, the more so that it is our neighbour.

The Soviet Union has a stake in durable and just peace in Asia. We declared this explicitly in Vladivostok and quite recently in the already famous Delhi Declaration signed by the Prime Minister of great India and myself. We again invite all states concerned to joint or parallel advance towards that goal, and to search for optimum solutions suiting everyone's interests to

the complex problems of that vast part of the world, designed by history to make an increasing contribution to the civilisation of the future.

Our Asia-Pacific platform is organically linked with our programme of putting an end to the arms race and eliminating the nuclear threat to mankind.

In Reykjavik, we tabled a package of mutually interconnected proposals, scrupulously reckoning with the interests of the parties at the talks and the whole world community. The meeting in Iceland has taken the process of the talks on nuclear disarmament to a qualitatively new stage. Movement from it can only be further forward, only forward. This is precisely the line pursued by the Soviet Union, and it will vigilantly see to it that the continuation of the talks should not mean a movement backward—to empty discussions used, as V. I. Lenin put it, to fool common folk.

The Soviet Union's proposals, forming an integral package of compromises, mutual concessions and a mutual balance of interests, remain in force.

And we will expose for everybody to hear the attempts at presenting our positions in a distorted light or misappropriating our initiatives, whoever may do so, the head of state or his officials in Geneva.

We are not going to bide our time, we do not set hopes upon "better times". We will further honestly and openly speak about the acute and dangerous problems of the contemporary world—with all who are ready to listen and understand, who feel their responsibility to their own peoples, who are seriously concerned that life should continue for ever. To that end it is necessary to put a stop to the arms race now.

To that end we made public, already after Reykjavik, from the rostrum of the Indian Parliament, new proposals directed at contributing to building an all-embracing security system jointly with our allies, the Warsaw Treaty Organisation; we proposed a meeting of working groups of NATO and the Warsaw Treaty member-states, a meeting between Marshal Kulikov and General Rogers, and a meeting between the secretaries-general of the Warsaw Treaty and NATO. Yet neither the first nor the second nor third proposal has met with a positive

response. And for half a year now we have been waiting for an answer from the countries of the Atlantic alliance to the Budapest initiative on a cut in conventional weapons and armed forces.

All that, in common with the destructive stand of our partners in Reykjavik, makes one think seriously about the extent to which the present generation of political leaders determining the stand of the West is prepared to accept disarmament. For it is a fact that some of them are completely in the power of the bosses of the military business, who could not care less about the concerns, hopes, views and the very lives of hundreds of millions of people.

Comrades, we are grateful to the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan for supporting our international policy, our struggle against the arms race.

The CPSU and the PDPA, the state leaderships of the USSR and the DRA are united by their common stands on the major issues of the present. Our co-operation is versatile and promising. Our solidarity with the Afghan people is invariable.

Dear Afghan Friends,

Your visit to the USSR is a major event in the relations between our parties and countries, an international event of great significance.

On October 14, 1919, V. I. Lenin met the plenipotentiary representative of Afghanistan here in the Kremlin with the words: "I am very glad to see in the red capital of the workers' and peasants' government a representative of the friendly Afghan people who are suffering and fighting against the imperialist yoke."

In the struggle for putting an end to the war forced by imperialism, in the effort for the national reconciliation and independent development of your country, you dear comrades can further count on the Soviet people's support.

May the bonds linking our parties get even stronger, may co-operation between the Soviet Union and the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan—an independent, non-aligned state friendly to us, our neighbour—further develop, and may friendship between the Soviet and Afghan peoples strengthen. □

Eduard Shevardnadze's talks with representative of Libyan Jamahiriya

TALKS took place on Monday between Eduard Shevardnadze, member of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, and Camel Hassan al-Machour, Secretary of the General People's Committee for Foreign Liaison of the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, who is now paying an official visit of friendship to the Soviet Union.

Eduard Shevardnadze outlined in detail the complex and controversial situation in the global matters of war or peace since Reykjavik, matters which will decide if mankind gets rid of the nuclear tumour and produces a new concept of a world that will be safe for all. Responsibility for the failure to use the unique opportunity to come to grips with all those questions is not borne by the Soviet Union, which displayed and continues to display utmost political will and readiness to respect the lawful interests of the other side and, which is most important, the interests of humanity as a whole.

Regrettably, the American Administration was not up to the situation and failed the test of

political maturity. Awareness is growing in the international community that it was precisely the 'Star Wars' programme, to which Washington is clinging, that became the stumbling block on the road to a nuclear-free future.

The sides agreed that the fight to save civilisation concerned all states without exception. Their ability to concentrate their efforts on the ultimate goal, the preservation of the human race, will largely determine the further progress of world history. Eduard Shevardnadze stressed that the Delhi Declaration signed by Mikhail Gorbachev and Rajiv Gandhi was an example of such an approach. It reflects the common commitment of the socialist and non-aligned countries to the ideal of a nuclear-free and non-violent world.

Camel Hassan al-Machour called for broader co-operation between the socialist countries and the Non-Aligned Movement in the efforts for the assertion of a new mode of political thinking and against the relapses of the imperialist policy of *diktat* and hegemony.

Eduard Shevardnadze stressed that the Soviet Union's principled line of support for the battle of the Libyan people for their freedom and independence remained unchanged.

Both sides characterised the anti-Syrian campaign unleashed by Washington and its

closest allies, including Israel, as another manifestation of the aggressive doctrine of neo-globalism and an attempt to exert brute pressure on a sovereign Arab country. They were unanimous that current tension in the Middle East imperatively demanded the overcoming of inter-Arab differences so as to give a rebuff to the encroachments by the forces of imperialism and Zionism on the independence and dignity of the Arabs. A sense of solidarity rather than secondary frictions and differences should prevail in the Arab world, which is facing a common threat.

Camel Hassan al-Machour was briefed on the efforts of the Soviet Union to advance the idea of establishing a preparatory committee for the convocation of an international conference on the Middle East.

Touching upon bilateral relations, the participants in the talks stated that in the recent period the bonds of traditional friendship and mutually beneficial co-operation between the USSR and Libya had grown markedly stronger. A major role in that process was played by the recent summit meetings, which identified broad opportunities for co-operation between the two countries both on the international scene and in the extension and improvement of their bilateral relations. The sides voiced satisfaction with the condition of their political dialogue and planned concrete steps to extend it further. □

Yegor Ligachev at 6th Congress of Communist Party of Vietnam

"IT is the internationalist duty of all fraternal socialist countries to develop co-operation with Vietnam," said Yegor Ligachev, a member of the Political Bureau and Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee. He was addressing the 6th Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) in Hanoi on Monday.

"The world socialist system", he pointed out, "has reached such a level in its development when the communist parties should find qualitatively new and non-standard solutions to complex problems, when a serious reorganisation and the renovation of all spheres of public life are required in order to open up even greater vistas for the manifestation of the immense creative abilities of the socialist system.

"Our major task, as we see it," Ligachev went on, "is to reveal more fully the immense potential of socialism. The acceleration of social and economic progress in the USSR and other fraternal states will enhance the prestige of real socialism in the world, will enhance its attractive force and act in a sobering way on the aggressive imperialist circles."

The head of the CPSU delegation emphasised that the entire complex of diverse Soviet-Vietnamese relations, sealed by the Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation between the USSR and Vietnam, was based on the principles of Marxism-Leninism and socialist internationalism, which meant both revolutionary solidarity and full independence of the states.

"The fraternal alliance of the CPSU and the

CPV is the chief force consolidating friendly relations between our countries," he pointed out.

"Our parties", Ligachev went on to say, "are unanimous in their approach to all key issues of world politics. The Soviet-American meeting in Reykjavik, held at the USSR's suggestion, vividly demonstrated that there is a real chance for starting the process of ridding mankind of the threat of world nuclear conflagration.

"At the same time it graphically outlined the chief obstacle on this path. Its essence lies in the US striving towards military superiority, towards acquiring more destructive space arms in order to dictate its will to peoples, to keep them in subordination.

"The American Administration has responded with nuclear explosions in Nevada to the USSR's nearly 18-month-long moratorium on nuclear testing in a bid to thwart everything positive that was outlined in Reykjavik, to deceive and confuse world public opinion.

"In sharp contrast with that course and with that morality was the Delhi Declaration on principles for a nuclear-weapon-free and non-violent world signed recently by Mikhail Gorbachev and Rajiv Gandhi."

The significance of the agreements reached during Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to India far exceeds the framework of Soviet-Indian relations.

His statements further developed the Soviet programme advanced in Vladivostok for ensuring peace, security and co-operation in the Asian-Pacific region, a region which is acquiring ever greater importance in world politics.

"As to South-East Asia," Yegor Ligachev said, "the Soviet Union's stand is clear and understandable. The solution of problems of

South-East Asia should be found by the countries in that region, on the basis of full respect for their sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, without outside interference in their internal affairs.

"The South-East Asian countries, especially Vietnam, became targets of imperialist aggression on several occasions. They gained their freedom and independence in fierce and bloody battles. Their striving for peace and international security is the greater.

"Solidarity between Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea, their close alliance, is a powerful factor for peace and stability in Asia.

"We welcome the sensible and fair policy of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea towards the constructive solution of problems existing in South-East Asia, towards the political settlement of the situation relating to Kampuchea," said the head of the CPSU delegation.

"The normalisation of relations between Vietnam and China would have a major and positive effect on improving the situation in Asia, and on improving the international climate as a whole.

"It is our deep conviction that the solution of this task is quite possible on the basis of direct, equitable, mutually acceptable dialogue. We reaffirm our support for a Vietnamese-Chinese dialogue with a view to eliminating unnecessary suspicions and mistrust. Vietnam's repeated proposals on this score are well known.

"As to Soviet-Chinese relations, we have favoured and favour the development of good-neighbourly relations with the People's Republic of China on a principled basis, without damage to the interests of other countries." □

Statement by Soviet Government on Rarotonga Treaty

HERE follows the full text of the statement of the Soviet Government on the Rarotonga Treaty. It was made by Yevgeni Samoteikin, USSR Ambassador to Australia, in Suva, the capital of Fiji, on Monday when signing Protocols Two and Three to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Free Zone in the Southern Pacific (the Rarotonga Treaty):

The Soviet Government, which is a consistent supporter of the creation of nuclear-free zones in various parts of the world as an important measure in the fight for the elimination of nuclear weapons, and wishing to contribute to the efforts of the countries of the South Pacific Forum in that area, has decided to sign Protocols Two and Three to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Free Zone in the Southern Pacific. The Soviet Union proceeds from the premise that the creation of such a zone will serve as an important contribution to forming a reliable security system in the Asian-Pacific region, will strengthen the international regime of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and will contribute towards attaining the goal of eliminating the world's nuclear weapons once and for all.

Expressing its readiness to become a guarantor of a nuclear-free zone in the southern Pacific, the Soviet Union hopes that all the other nuclear powers will show appropriate responsibility in approaching the initiative of the countries of that

region, and will do their utmost to ensure reliably and guarantee the truly non-nuclear status of the non-nuclear zone.

In signing Protocols Two and Three to the treaty on a nuclear-free zone in the southern part of the Pacific, the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics considers it necessary to make the following statement.

1. The Soviet Union proceeds from the premise that the transportation of nuclear explosive devices by parties to the Treaty anywhere within the limits and outside the limits of the nuclear-free zone in the southern Pacific is covered by the prohibitions envisaged by point 'A' of Article 3 of the Treaty, in which the sides commit themselves "not to exercise control over any nuclear explosive devices in any form, anywhere within the limits and outside the limits of the nuclear-free zone"

2. Point two of Article 5 of the Treaty permits that each party to the Treaty is entitled to taking on its own a decision as regards whether calls of foreign ships and flying vehicles carrying nuclear explosive devices at its ports and airfields or their transit through its territorial sea, archipelago waters and air space be allowed. In that connection the Soviet Union reaffirms its stand that permission for transit of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices in any form, and calls at ports and airfields within the limits of the nuclear-free zone by foreign warships and flying vehicles with nuclear explosive devices on board, would be in conflict with the aims of the Treaty

and incompatible with the nuclear-free status of the zone.

3. In the event of any actions undertaken by a state or states which are parties to the Rarotonga Treaty in violation of their main commitments under the Treaty connected with the non-nuclear status of the zone, and perpetration by one or several states who are party to the Treaty of an act of aggression with the support of a state having nuclear weapons or jointly with it, with the use by such a state of the territory, air space, territorial sea or archipelago waters of those countries for calls by naval ships and flying vehicles with nuclear weapons on board or for transit of nuclear weapons, the Soviet Union will have the right to consider itself free from the commitments undertaken under Protocol Two to the Treaty. In the event of any other actions by the parties to the Treaty incompatible with their non-nuclear status, the USSR reserves for itself the right to reconsider the commitments undertaken under the said Protocol.

4. The Soviet Union proceeds from the premise that the commitments undertaken by it under Protocol Two to the Rarotonga Treaty also apply to the territory to which the status of the nuclear-free zone applies under Protocol One to the Treaty. In so doing, the Soviet Union reaffirms its stand on the granting of independence to the colonial countries and peoples under the UN declaration on that issue (UN General Assembly Resolution, 1514/XU of December 14, 1960).

5. The Soviet Government declares that the provisions of the articles of Protocols Two and Three can apply to the text of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Free Zone in the Southern Pacific in the wording of the Treaty as it has been formulated by the time of the signing of the protocols by the USSR Government, considering its stand set forth in this statement. In this connection, no amendment to the Treaty that would come into force in accordance with the provisions of Article 11 or any change in the geographical outlines in the nuclear-free zone as set out in point 'A' of Article 1 and described in supplement one to the Treaty, without an explicitly expressed consent to that by the USSR. □

Eduard Shevardnadze's message to Chairman of South Pacific Forum

EDUARD SHEVARDNADZE has sent a message to Kamisese Mara, Chairman of the South Pacific Forum and Prime Minister of Fiji.

The message is a reply to the letter that was sent by Kamisese Mara earlier and which accompanied the texts of the protocols to the Treaty on the South Pacific Nuclear-Free Zone.

The message announces the Soviet Government's decision to sign Protocols 2 and 3 to the above-mentioned Treaty. It is pointed out that the Soviet Union's support for the establishment of a nuclear-free zone in the South Pacific is quite natural, because "this step by the members of the South Pacific Forum fully accords with the main task which our country sets itself in the international arena: to end the arms race on Earth and

to prevent it in outer space.

"It is precisely the attainment of these goals that is being served by the bold and at the same time quite feasible programme which we put forward at the Soviet-US meeting in Reykjavik and which makes it possible to rid the world of nuclear weapons by the turn of the century," Eduard Shevardnadze emphasises.

"Our proposals are also aimed at preventing the transfer of military rivalry to outer space. An extremely costly and particularly dangerous space arms race, which would also become the main obstacle to the elimination of nuclear weapons is being countered by the real alternative which is being suggested by the Soviet Union: peaceful exploration of outer space on the basis of co-operation among all countries for common weal and prosperity." □

Soviet Consulate opens in Shanghai

THE state flag of the Soviet Union was hoisted in downtown Shanghai on Monday as the Soviet Consulate-General was opened in a ceremony in this major industrial centre of the People's Republic of China.

The head of the Soviet Government delegation, Serafim Kolpakov, who is Minister of Ferrous Metallurgy of the USSR, said at the ceremony that this event reflected the positive changes that had taken place lately in various spheres of Soviet-Chinese relations.

He pointed to the similarity of the tasks of economic reorganisation that were being handled by the two countries and stressed the striving of the peoples of the USSR and China for lasting peace on Earth.

"The Chinese exhibition in Moscow held last summer and the current trade and industrial show of the USSR in Peking attest to the development of Soviet-Chinese ties," Kolpakov

said.

"The Soviet people know Shanghai as a city of labour and combat glory of the Chinese proletariat, as the place where the Communist Party of China was born in 1921."

Liu Zhenyuan, Vice-Chairman of Shanghai People's Government, said in reply that the peoples of the Soviet Union and China were linked by traditional friendship.

Recent years had seen a considerable broadening of exchanges in various spheres between the two countries, and development of economic, trade, scientific, technological and cultural ties.

He pointed to Shanghai's role in socialist construction in China and declared that the people of Shanghai were prepared to promote scientific, technological and cultural exchanges between the two countries, and to facilitate trade and economic co-operation between them. □

Advance on Soviet contribution to UN budget

ALEXANDER BELONOGOV, the Soviet Union's permanent representative to the United Nations, has notified the United Nations Secretary-General, Javier Perez de Cuellar, of the Soviet Union's decision to pay in December an advance of 22 million dollars on its contribution to the UN budget, so as to ease the financial crisis of the world body.

The permanent UN representatives of the Ukraine and Byelorussia have also informed the Secretary-General of the advance payment of two million and one million dollars respectively to the budget of the organisation. This month the Soviet Union will pay a total of 25 million dollars into the budget of the organisation.

At a press conference in the UN headquarters last Friday, Alexander Belonogov expressed the hope that the example would be followed by other UN members, primarily the major contributors.

"The world community has the right to expect that the United States, which is to blame for the financial crisis of the United Nations, will revise its stand and pay in full its contribution to the UN budget. This will only be just," he stressed. □

Statement by Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman

THE following statement by a Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman, in connection with the US violation of the SALT-2 Treaty, was made public at a press conference in Moscow last Friday.

The US decision to abandon finally the SALT-2 Treaty, and actually exceed one of the key limits on strategic arms recorded in that agreement, has evoked universal condemnation as an action directed at undermining the accord-based structure of curbing the arms race.

At the same time many governments and world public opinion highly assessed the wisdom and restraint of the Soviet Government in not yielding to the provocative step undertaken by Washington in declaring that it would not pull out for the time being from the restrictions under the SALT-I Agreement and the SALT-2 Treaty.

The USSR has not become an accomplice of the US in undermining and destroying this international agreement. As a result the US has found itself in complete isolation, presenting itself to the world as the opponent of international stability.

This position could not but cast doubt on the sincerity and seriousness of the American side's declarations about its intention to strive for the limitation of arms and to advance towards a nuclear-free world.

Realising that abandoning the SALT-2 Treaty deals a blow at US prestige in the world arena, the American Administration has resorted to gross unscrupulous slander with regard to the Soviet Union in a bid to whitewash itself at least in some way.

With this aim in view the American Arms Control and Disarmament Agency the other day issued a special press release alleging—in an

attempt to justify the US decision to break out of the agreement—that the Soviet Union had violated SALT-2.

The groundless arguments in the American propaganda document have been convincingly refuted on several occasions by the Soviet side, so there is no need to dwell on them in detail again.

Under the pretext of baseless allegations that the Soviet Union has developed a second ICBM, banned by the Treaty, the US wants to reserve the "right" to acquire, along with the MX missile, another strategic missile—Midgetman. The decision to develop the latter had been adopted, however, long before the concoctions about the new Soviet missile were circulated.

Just as groundless are the attempts to accuse the USSR of exceeding the level of strategic delivery vehicles announced at the signing of the SALT-2 Treaty.

As to the US "concern" over telemetry coding in missile tests, it is conspicuous that whenever the American side has been offered constructive variants to remove the "concern", it has invariably evaded discussing them.

Hard as the US may try it can never deny the irrevocable truth that the Soviet Union has always honoured and continues to honour—honestly and conscientiously—its international commitments.

It is not up to the US, whose record comprises dozens of violations of international agreements, to teach others how to abide by these accords.

It is important now to give most serious attention to another side of the matter, a side that cannot but cause general anxiety.

More and more new facts, surfacing nearly every day, show that the US has made disinformation and slander one of the basic tools of its foreign policy.

In order to justify the armed invasion of tiny Grenada, the US fabricated the hoax about the "threat" to the lives of the American nationals who were on the island.

In a bid to justify another bombing raid on Libya, the American Administration flooded its press with false reports about terrorist acts allegedly prepared by that country.

A similar campaign is being launched against Syria.

The latest example of US actions of this sort is what has become known as the "Irangate" affair, which has triggered off an unprecedented scandal in America and beyond.

Every day of inquiry into the affair irrefutably proves that in carrying out covert arms shipments to Iran, the US for several years added fuel to the fire of the bloody, senseless conflict between Iran and Iraq under the cover of rhetoric about peace.

The deception was directed both at the population in the US and the entire international community.

Facts of this kind show that the tactics of disinformation and lie employed to an ever greater extent by American diplomacy are playing a rather negative, destructive role in international life.

They plant mistrust and suspicion in relations between states, and increase friction and conflicts between them. It is known from history—the history of our time even—that deception has often been used for justifying armed attacks and kindling military conflicts.

One should be extremely vigilant and attentive to the behaviour of those who conduct such policies, and promptly expose their machinations.

Openly destroying one of the most important agreements designed to ensure strategic stability around the world—the SALT-2 Treaty—Washington has neither moral, nor political nor legal right to justify its actions by accusations against other nations.

All responsibility for the undermining of the agreement rests completely with the US alone. □

Anatoli Kovalev's press conference in Vienna

"ON instructions from the Soviet leadership, the USSR delegation at the Vienna meeting has submitted an official document on the convocation of a widely representative conference in Moscow on developing co-operation in the humanitarian field between the CSCE participating countries," said Anatoli Kovalev, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR.

Speaking at a press conference in Vienna last Wednesday, he recalled that such proposal had been put forward by Eduard Shevardnadze at the Vienna meeting of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) on November 5.

"The Soviet side suggests that the forum consider the issues of people-to-people contacts, information, culture and education," Anatoli Kovalev pointed out. "that is, the entire range of issues of co-operation in the humanitarian field, as they were outlined in the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference.

"It is suggested that this be done within the context of encouragement of and respect for civil, political, economic, social, cultural and other rights and freedoms of the individual in each CSCE participating country.

"It is suggested that the forum in Moscow hold an all-round discussion oriented towards

practical results, and that it reach mutual understanding which would make it possible to improve the situation in the humanitarian field in all the countries participating in the CSCE process.

"We hold that it is time to examine thoroughly and in a businesslike manner the entire aggregate of humanitarian problems," he emphasised. "It is time to remove everything extraneous and artificial, find points of contact in our positions and interests, and determine a sphere of possible co-operation.

"We do not yet give a date for the beginning of the conference in Moscow," Kovalev went on to say.

"This question, just like other organisational aspects of the matter, should become the subject of consideration and agreement at the Vienna meeting. We are for the question of the conference in Moscow to be decided upon at the Vienna meeting before its conclusion. In other words, we are for accords to be translated into life as they ripen.

"Following the Reykjavik meeting, there is no road back to old ways, to old thinking now that the issue of the very survival of mankind is so acute. This is why we have invited all the participants in the Vienna meeting to both think in a new way and to act with a view to achieving maximum practical results."

In answer to a question as to what steps are being taken by the Warsaw Treaty member-countries to establish contacts with NATO with regard to starting a dialogue on a reduction of armed forces and conventional arms

in Europe, Anatoli Kovalev said:

"The Soviet Union has made efforts to establish contacts between the Warsaw Treaty Organisation and NATO.

"Marshal of the Soviet Union Viktor Kulikov, Commander-in-Chief of the Joint Armed Forces of the Warsaw Treaty member-countries, has suggested a meeting with General Bernard Rogers, Supreme Allied Commander of NATO's Armed Forces in Europe.

"The working group of the Warsaw Treaty member-countries on issues related to a reduction of armed forces and conventional arms in Europe has addressed NATO's special group on conventional arms control with a suggestion to establish direct contact.

"Herbert Krolikowski, General Secretary of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty member-countries, has sent a letter to NATO Secretary-General Lord Carrington expressing the hope that the proposals on arranging a meeting between Viktor Kulikov and Bernard Rogers and on establishing contacts between the working groups that were set up within the framework of the two alliances would be considered in NATO." □

Mikhail Gorbachev receives Britain's Ambassador to USSR

ON Monday, Mikhail Gorbachev received Bryan Cartledge, Ambassador of Britain to the USSR, at the latter's request, in connection with a personal message from Britain's Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and with her forthcoming visit to the USSR. □

At the CPSU Central Committee and the USSR Council of Ministers

HERE follows the full text of the report 'At the CPSU Central Committee and the USSR Council of Ministers':

An especially important stage in the work to eliminate the consequences of the accident has been completed at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant as a result of the implementation of major scientific, technical and other measures.

The state commission has accepted for operation a complex of protection structures for the damaged power unit. The destroyed reactor has ceased to be a source of radioactive contamination of the environment. After the implementation of all the necessary safety measures the first and second power generating units were put into operation.

The completion of this stage and the fulfilment in a short period of time of large-scale tasks aimed at eliminating the consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant was possible because of the dedicated and heroic labour of workers, engineers and technicians, of scientists and specialists, and of officers and men of the Soviet Army. This was the objective of the organising and political work of the Party and Soviet bodies, and the ministries and organisations of the USSR.

The extremely complicated work to entomb the destroyed power generating unit, work which had no analogy in national or world practice, was carried out in difficult conditions. This unique structure designed by Soviet scientists and specialists is fitted out with the necessary equipment, diagnosing instruments and control facilities. Modern equipment was used during its construction. Some 300,000 cubic metres of concrete were laid. Metal structures weighing over 6,000 tons were assembled. Measures were taken to decontaminate buildings and structures of the nuclear power plant, as well as equipment of the first and second power units, down to the level corresponding to the established norms.

Much has been done to ensure the safety of the population and to protect people's health. Large-scale medical check-ups using modern methods

were carried out. Two hundred and thirty-seven people were hospitalised diagnosed with radiation sickness. All the most up-to-date methods were used in their medical treatment. Unfortunately, as has already been reported, the lives of 28 people could not be saved. Most of the people who were affected by the disease have now resumed working.

The evacuation of the population from the distressed areas was organised efficiently. A total of 116,000 people were resettled. The necessary living and working conditions were provided for them. Some 12,000 comfortable houses with allotments, social and cultural facilities, new roads and engineering structures were built. Practically all the able-bodied evacuees were given jobs in their new areas of settlement.

For the purpose of creating normal living and working conditions for operating personnel at the Chernobyl nuclear plant and for the builders eliminating the consequences of the accident, the Zelyony Mys settlement for rotating shifts was put into service, in the Kiev Region. Eight thousand flats were given to their families in Kiev and Chernigov. The construction of a new town for power engineering workers is under way.

The state rendered substantial material assistance to the population affected by the accident. The people are being paid compensation for damage inflicted. The aggregate sum provided for this purpose amounts to some 800 million roubles. Apart from this, considerable resources were spent on the construction of apartment houses and social and cultural facilities. Displaying a profound feeling of collectivism and civic duty, Soviet people donated some 520 million roubles to the relief fund for eliminating the consequences of the accident.

Decontamination was conducted on a large scale in the areas affected by radioactive contamination. Five hundred populated localities, some 60,000 apartment houses and other structures were decontaminated. A large amount of work was carried out to protect water resources from radioactive substances. Dozens of kilometres of protective dikes were built in the floodlands of the Pripyat, Braginka and Dnieper rivers. As a result, the quality of water in the Dnieper basin meets sanitary norms.

Special treatment of farmlands is being carried

out throughout the zone. Measures are being taken to create conditions for the resumption of agricultural activities, taking due account of the soil and climatic features characteristic of that region.

All that has been done to eliminate the consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant has resulted in a dramatic improvement in the radiation situation in the 30km zone and the territory adjacent to it.

Necessary measures are being taken to ensure the safety of all the operating Soviet nuclear power plants, and for raising standards in the operation of equipment, in production and technological discipline, and in the skill of the personnel. Exactness on the part of the corresponding inspection bodies has been intensified. The USSR Ministry of Nuclear Power Engineering has been created. An interdepartmental Scientific and Technological Council for Nuclear Power Engineering has been set up at the USSR State Committee for Science and Technology to coordinate the work of the ministries.

Our co-operation with the International Atomic Energy Agency has been considerably expanded and consolidated of late. The agency was given all the necessary information on the causes of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant and on measures taken to eliminate its consequences. Serious steps were taken to realise Soviet initiatives for creating an international regime for safe development of nuclear power engineering at a special session of the IAEA General Conference convened at the proposal of this country.

The initiatives were widely supported, and documents of much importance were adopted—the convention on prompt warning and on the rendering of assistance in case of a nuclear accident. Last November the conventions were ratified by the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet.

The Soviet Union received with gratitude the numerous manifestations of sympathy and support on the part of foreign organisations, officials and individuals in connection with the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. The grave consequences of the accident remind us once again of the great responsibility of all countries for warding off the menace of a nuclear war, for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons in the world.

Our people will remember forever, with a feeling of profound thankfulness, the civic and labour feat of workers, engineers, scientists, specialists, officers and men of the Soviet Armed Forces which was accomplished in the course of localising the Chernobyl accident and eliminating its consequences. The Party and the State appreciate to the full their contribution to this difficult and responsible undertaking. A large group of most distinguished civilian workers and army servicemen were awarded Soviet orders and medals.

A difficult stage of the work has been completed. As is known, Soviet people were informed of the causes of the accident, the conclusions drawn from the results of the investigation and the measures for ensuring the safety and complete reliability of nuclear power plants. These measures are being consistently put into practice. Much remains to be done. The CPSU Central Committee and the USSR Council of Ministers have charged all those who are taking part in this extremely important work with the task of realising to the full the programme outlined for eliminating the consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. □

Press briefing at USSR Foreign Ministry

"THE session of the NATO Council which ended in Brussels showed that the NATO countries were not ready for complete liquidation of nuclear weapons," Boris Pyadyshv, first deputy head of the Information Department of the USSR Foreign Ministry, said on Tuesday at a briefing for Soviet and foreign journalists in the Press Centre of the USSR Foreign Ministry.

"Hinging their military plans precisely on the nuclear factor and finding it difficult to give a plausible explanation for their principled unwillingness to destroy nuclear weapons, the NATO planners reduce their explanations to stereotype references to the factor of nuclear deterrence which is allegedly a guarantee of NATO security," he pointed out.

"It is clear from materials of the NATO session that the United States is increasingly departing from the spirit of Reykjavik and the positions outlined in Reykjavik by the two sides. The NATO session has clearly shown the unwillingness of the bloc's leadership to examine the prospect for complete liquidation of nuclear weapons.

"We were waiting for the NATO Council's reply to the Budapest programme for cutting armed forces and conventional armaments in Europe. But we have not got a complete reply to it," noted Boris Pyadyshv.

"However, we would not like to regard the present NATO position and NATO proposals on conventional weapons as completely negative. The Brussels declaration on control over conventional weapons talks of the expediency of drafting a new mandate for the negotiations on control over conventional weapons in Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals.

"At the same time the hackneyed idea of 'asymmetrical reductions' in conventional weapons has been resorted to again. It means that in actual fact the question is put in such a way that only the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Treaty member-countries have to deal with cutting conventional weapons. The NATO session openly took the course of accelerated build-up of conventional weapons by members of the organisation." □