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Mikhail Gorbachev's press conference in Reykjavik

Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, gave a press conference in Reykjavik on October 12 for the journalists who covered the Soviet-American meeting. Addressing the media, Mikhail Gorbachev said:

Good Evening, Ladies and Gentlemen, Comrades,

I welcome you all.

Our meeting with the US President, Mr Reagan, ended about an hour ago. It had lasted a little longer than we had planned. It was made necessary by business at hand. So I want to make my excuses to you for having failed to come for the press conference at the appointed time.

You already know that the meeting took place on the initiative of the Soviet leadership. But, naturally, there would have been no meeting if Mr Reagan had not agreed to it. That is why, I would say, it was our joint decision to have that meeting.

Now it is over. It is sometimes said that face to face, you don't see the other's face. I've just emerged from the meeting which, especially in the closing stage, passed in pointed debates. And I am still under the impression of those debates. Nevertheless, I will try already now not only to share my impressions but also to sort out what took place. Yet it will be the first impressions, the early evaluations, the first analysis. The meeting as a whole is yet to be evaluated more substantially.

It was a major meeting and you yourselves will realise this when I recount its contents, the problems which were the subject of a very broad, very intensive and very interested discussion at it.

The atmosphere at the meeting was friendly. We had an opportunity to present our views freely and without restrictions. This enabled us to further our understanding on major problems of world politics, bilateral relations, primarily on those questions which are in the focus of world public attention, on problems of war and peace and ending the nuclear arms race, in short on the entire complex of questions coming under that subject.

Before going over directly to the characterisation of the meeting itself, the contents of the discussions, the proposals of the sides and its results, I want to explain to you why we came up with the initiative to hold the Reykjavik meeting. I am a regular reader of the world press and I saw in those days what a broad response the news of the meeting provoked.

A good deal was said in this context both about the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee and the US President. The question was asked if they had not made haste, if there was any need for such a meeting, who made concessions to whom, who outplayed whom, and so on and so forth. But you know, the cause that was the starting point for our proposal to the US President to have a meeting without delay, and his decision positively to respond to our invitation, were very important.

I would now like to recall Geneva, when we met for the first time. It was a major dialogue and now, after quite some time, we have not revised our evaluation of the Geneva meeting. At that time, if you remember, we noted the special responsibility of the USSR and the United States of America for safeguarding peace and said jointly that nuclear war should never be fought and that there could be no winners in it. That was a statement of immense importance. We also said that neither side would seek military superiority.

It also was a very important statement.

Almost a year has passed since Geneva. The Soviet leadership remained loyal to the commitments it assumed there. Having returned from Geneva, we extended our moratorium: we had had it in effect till January 1 this year. Our test sites have been quiet for 14 months now—is this not evidence of our commitment to the Geneva accords and our responsibility for the destinies of peace? Those were not easy decisions since tests in Nevada continued at that time and are going on now. On January 15 we made a major statement, in which a programme for the elimination of nuclear weapons by the end of this century was formulated.

Last June the Warsaw Treaty countries put forward a major comprehensive programme for large-scale reductions in the conventional armaments and armed forces in Europe. It also was a major step in view of the concerns aired by the West Europeans and the United States.

Drawing the lesson of the Chernobyl tragedy, we put forward the initiative on an emergency IAEA session in Vienna. It did take place and you know about its results—they are very promising. Now we have an international mechanism making it possible to resolve many important questions of the safety of nuclear power engineering.

In other words, in the period under review—and I do not think I am exaggerating by thus evaluating our policy because what I talk about is facts, not merely intentions—we have been doing everything possible to contribute to the emergence of a new thinking in the nuclear age. It gives us pleasure to note that the shoots of this new thinking are sprouting, on the European field too. One piece of evidence was the success of the Stockholm meeting.

At this point, I'll probably conclude the list of the concrete actions that we have undertaken, guided by the letter and spirit of the Geneva agreements with President Reagan. The facts themselves, I think, allow you to assess the seriousness of our attitude to the Geneva agreements.

Still, why the need for the Reykjavik meeting, what were the motives for our initiative?

As a matter of fact, the hopes for major changes in the world situation, which we all entertained, started to evaporate shortly after the Geneva meeting, and, in my opinion, not without grounds.

Much was said, perhaps too much, during the Soviet-American talks; between 50 and 100 variants of proposals were put forward, as I told the President yesterday. This fact alone raises doubts as to the fruitfulness of the discussions under way there.

If there were one or two, even three variants, which would make it possible to narrow somehow the scope of discussions and concentrate the search on some major directions, it would be possible to expect that the search would bring about concrete agreements and proposals to the governments. . .

But nothing of this kind is taking place in Geneva, although the discussion there is concerned with key issues of world politics. The negotiations have recently been running idle, so to speak, and are practically at a standstill. The arms race has not been stopped, and it is becoming increasingly clear that developments are approaching a point at which a new spiral of the arms race becomes inevitable, with unpredictable military and political consequences.

Our major initiatives, which I have already mentioned, have evoked a broad response from the world public. But they have not found due understanding on the part of the American Administration.

The situation has been worsening, anxiety around the world has started to grow again. I think it is no exaggeration—you yourselves are witnesses to that—that the world is in turmoil.

The world is in turmoil, and it demands that the leaders of all countries, above all major powers, primarily the Soviet Union and the United States, display political will and determination capable of stopping the dangerous trends.

Thus, something was to be done to overcome such a course of developments. We reached the conclusion that a new impetus was necessary, a powerful impetus to turn the processes in the required direction.

Such impetuses could be made only by the leaders of the USSR and the US. That is why, in replying to President Reagan's July 25 letter, I decided to invite him to an immediate meeting. I wrote: The situation is such that we ought to put aside all affairs for a couple of days and hold the meeting without delay.

The letter was handed over to the President by Eduard Shevardnadze.

Now, this extremely important session has been completed. We believed that much would depend on its outcome. And, naturally, we came to the meeting not empty-handed.

What have we brought to Reykjavik? We have brought a whole package of major proposals which, once accepted, could really bring about within a brief period a breakthrough, I would say, in all directions of the struggle for limiting nuclear weapons and really avert the threat of nuclear war, would make it possible to start movement towards a nuclear-free world.

I suggested that the President and I give right here in Reykjavik binding instructions to our

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foreign ministers and other corresponding departments to draft three agreements that we could sign with the President later during my visit to the United States.

The first—on strategic arms—stipulated a fifty per cent reduction, and no less, with an eye to fully eliminating these deadliest of weapons already by the turn of the century.

We proceeded from the premise that the world is waiting for really major steps, deep reductions, rather than some cosmetic steps—merely to calm down public opinion for a certain period. Really bold and responsible actions are now required in the interests of the entire world, including the peoples of the Soviet Union and the United States.

Naturally, both the Soviet and the American delegations which would have been instructed to draft the agreement on strategic arms would have balanced the reduction of their historical structure in a positive and honest way.

The point at issue is the very triad that was recognised way back when drafting SALT-2. But when we started discussing this issue with the President, there re-emerged in response everything that figures at the Geneva talks—all levels and sublevels, in brief, much arithmetics, and everything intended to confuse the essence of the matter.

We then put forward the following specification: to reduce by half each component of the strategic offensive armaments: land-based strategic missiles, submarine-launched strategic missiles and strategic bombers.

The American delegation agreed to that. Thus, we reached agreement on a very big issue.

I also draw your attention to the fact that we made serious concessions here.

There also was concern about Asia. We offered a compromise there as well: let us sit down to negotiations immediately, clarify complaints and find a solution. We understood that the question of missiles with a range of less than 1,000 km was bound to arise. So we made a proposal on that question: a freeze on those missiles and talks on what to do with them.

These are the major measures we want to be taken. I think that the Americans had not expected this from us but they entered discussion and stated frankly that they were not happy about removing their missiles from Europe. They began anew to invite us to their intermediate option. We, however, insisted on the total riddance from Europe of both Soviet and American medium-range missiles.

You must remember, too, that when we made our proposal on 50 per cent cuts in Geneva, we counted medium-range missiles as strategic weapons because our territory is within their reach. Now we have dropped that demand, along with the question of forward-based systems.

Agreement was thus reached in Reykjavik on cuts in strategic weapons thanks to these major concessions.

Our next proposal concerned medium-range missiles. We proposed that instructions be given to draw up an accord on weapons of that type too, with a view to giving up all the options which had been discussed up to that time, temporary or interim, and going back to the earlier American proposal on the total elimination of American and Soviet medium-range missiles in Europe. Moreover, unlike our Geneva proposals, we now left absolutely aside the nuclear potentials of France and Britain. Although, you understand, it was a very large concession on our part. Indeed, those two countries are allies of the USA, and they have large nuclear potentials, which continue to be built up and upgraded. And all of their military activities are closely coordinated within NATO. We know this for certain. We nevertheless removed that obstacle to agreement.

In the course of the discussion on that question, we drew the US President's attention to the fact that he was to all appearances renouncing his brainchild, the "zero option", which he was insistently offering some time ago. We now took it up.

The discussion, and very pointed discussion, continued into today. And we decided to take another constructive step to meet the other side: we stated that if the American and Soviet missiles in Europe are eliminated, we agree to have 100 warheads left on our medium-range missiles and the Americans as many on theirs in US territory.

And, ultimately, we reached agreement also on that type of nuclear weapon, albeit, as I have already said, our major concession helped here too.

But then advance has to be started in some way. I have pointed this out on more than one occasion. There is a need for bold, innovative solutions! If we always turn to the past for advice and use what belongs to very different times, without regard for where we are today and where we will be tomorrow, and that there may be no tomorrow at all if we act in this way, there will be no dialogue. There must be some way of making a start. So we made this compromise although, I repeat, it was not easy for us. In short, we agreed at the meeting with the US President also on the abolition and reduction of missiles.

In view of our readiness to make deep cuts in nuclear weapons, we formulated a question as follows: as soon as we are entering the concrete phase of the elimination of nuclear weapons, there must be absolute clarity about verification. Verification must now become tougher. The Soviet Union stands for triple verification, which should guarantee absolute confidence for each side that it would not be led into a trap. We reaffirmed our readiness for any form of verification. That question was removed, too, because of this stand of ours.

One more problem in view of our setting about the practical abolition of nuclear weapons is such: each side should have a guarantee that during that time the other side will not be seeking military superiority. I think that it is a perfectly fair and legitimate requirement both politically and militarily.

Politically: if we begin reductions, we should take care that all existing brakes on the development of new types of weapons be not only preserved, but also strengthened.

Militarily: indeed, care should be taken to preclude the following situation: both sides have reduced the nuclear potentials and while the reduction process is underway, one of the sides secretly contemplates and captures the initiative and attains military superiority.

This is inadmissible. I apply this to the Soviet Union. And we have all rights to lay similar demands on the American side.

In this connection, we raised the question in the following way: when we embark on the stage of a real, deep reduction and, after ten years, of the elimination of the nuclear potential of the Soviet Union and the United States, it is necessary that this period should not see the shaking of the mechanisms restraining the arms race, above all such as the ABM Treaty. These mechanisms should be consolidated.

Our proposal was reduced to the following: the sides consolidate the ABM Treaty of unlimited duration by assuming equal pledges that they shall not use the right to break out of the treaty within the next ten years.

Is this proposition correct and logical? It is logical.

Is it serious? It is serious.

Does it meet the interests of both sides? It does meet the interests of both sides.

Simultaneously, we suggested that all the ABM requirements be strictly observed within these ten years, that the development and testing of space weapons be banned and only research and testing in laboratories be allowed.

What did we mean by this?

We are aware of the commitment of the American Administration and the President to SDI. Apparently, our consent to its continuation and to laboratory tests offers the President an opportunity to go through with research and eventually to get clear what SDI is, what it is about. Although it is already clear to many people, ourselves included.

And it was at that point that a true battle of two approaches to world politics, including such questions as the termination of the arms race and a ban on nuclear weapons, began.

The American Administration and the President insisted to the end that America should have the right to test and study everything involved in SDI not only in laboratories but elsewhere, including outer space.

But who will agree to this?

And then it turned out that we were about to take most important history-making decisions, inasmuch as until now the previous agreements—ABM, SALT-1 and SALT-2—dealt only with a limitation of arms, and now it was to be a considerable cut. But since, as we have once again convinced ourselves, the US Administration—coming to believe in its technological advantage—is out to break through via SDI to military superiority, it has gone to burying these almost-concluded agreements, on which we already reached understanding. It only left to us to draw up treaties and outline the procedure for their practical implementation. And all that could be signed during my visit to Washington. The US side has wrecked that decision.

I told the President that we were missing an historic chance. Our positions had never been so close.

Bidding me good-bye, the President said that he was disappointed and that I had from the outset come unwilling to look for agreements and accords: why did I display such firmness on SDI and the problem of testing, all that range of problems, because of one word?

But I think that the matter is not words but substance. Herein lies the key to the understanding of what the US Administration has on its mind. And I think that it has on its mind what, as I now see, is on the mind of the American military-industrial complex. The administration is captive to the complex and the President is not free to take such a decision. We made breaks and held debates and I see that the President was not given support. And that was why our meeting failed when we already were close to producing historic results.

That was the sort of dramatic situation that arose at that meeting, when, in spite of very substantial concessions on our part, we failed to reach accord.

Although our dialogue with the USA was difficult, it continued after Geneva and I put to the President my view of what our meeting during my visit to the United States of America should be like. It is known to you.

It is not a condition. I think it is understanding of our responsibility, both my own and the President's. It prompts precisely this approach to a future meeting in Washington. We need a productive meeting. It should really lead to tangible results, cardinal changes and steps, especially in such urgent questions as nuclear arms control, prevention of the arms race and elimination of nuclear weapons.

I told him so in my letters and repeated it in person during our meeting: you, Mr. President, and I must not permit our meeting in Washington to fail. That is why I called upon you to have a meeting without delay. We have constructive contributions to make so as to reach agreement and come to a Washington meeting with serious proposals and serious decisions.

I cannot presume even for one moment that we have a meeting in Washington and that that meeting fails. What then, generally speaking, should people think in the Soviet Union, in the USA and all over the world? What sort of politicians are at the helm of those enormous states? They meet each other, exchange letters, have already had their third meeting but they cannot agree on anything. This, I think, would be a downright scandalous outcome with unpredictable consequences. We just cannot permit this to happen. This would cause disappointment all over the world, not only in our countries.

This is in fact an outline of a Washington meeting as regards the way we should hold it and the results we should achieve. That was what prompted us to propose a working meeting here, in Reykjavik, so as to sort out everything in a business-like manner, to listen to each other attentively and to try to find points of contact and common approaches that would meet the interests of our two countries, the interests of our allies and those of the peoples of all countries.

Regrettably, the Americans came to this meeting empty-handed, with a set of mothballed proposals which are already choking the Geneva talks. We, as you see, tabled our proposals to overturn this situation to clear the way, go over to a new stage and actually resolve the outstanding questions.

Now I have told you what happened.

What is to be done?

The United States remains as a reality, and the Soviet Union remains as a reality. A character in a novel of one of our Russian writers was going to close America—but could not do so. We do not have such a syndrome. America is a reality, quite a reality. The Soviet Union is I think also a substantial reality. But the world, too, is a reality, and today one cannot gain any authority or—what is more important—resolve outstanding problems if one does not reckon with the realities of today's world.

At this meeting, we felt there was a shortage of new thinking. And there re-emerged the ghost of pursuit for military superiority.

This summer I had a meeting with Mr. Nixon, and he said to me: I have grounds to say, based on my vast political and life experience, that the search for that ghost of superiority has taken us too far. Now we do not know how to break out of the pileups formed by the mounds of nuclear weapons. All this is complicating, deteriorating the situation in the world.

I think, nevertheless, that agreements have become apparent here. They have only not been endorsed.

We put forward our proposals in a package. I think you understand why this was done. Nevertheless, the very path that we have covered with these agreements on major cuts in nuclear weapons gives us substantial experience and considerable gain.

I think that the US President and we should reflect on the entire situation that has ultimately evolved here at the meeting, and make another try and step over the things that divide us.

We have agreed on many things already, traversed a long path. The President, probably, needs to consult Congress, political circles and the American public. Let America ponder on all that. We will be waiting, without withdrawing our proposals that we have made public. In fact, we have come to agreement on them. That was the first point.

Secondly, I think that all realistically-minded forces in the world should act now. We all, living in the socialist world, in the capitalist world and in the developing world, now have a unique chance: to really start, at last, work on ending the arms race, banning nuclear weapons, destroying them and diverting the nuclear threat from mankind.

In this connection, we submitted the following proposal to the US President: let us agree to start talks on banning nuclear explosions immediately after the conclusion of our meeting in Reykjavik.

At that, we proposed that this be a process in the course of which we could examine at some stage, perhaps even on a top-priority basis, also the question of thresholds, and the nuclear blast yield, and the number of nuclear explosions per year, and the fate of the 1974 and 1976 treaties, and would move further towards the elaboration of a comprehensive treaty banning all nuclear explosions.

I'll tell you that we were close to finding a formula on this question as well. We told the American side: we do not demand that you introduce a moratorium. It is up to you. You report to your Congress, to the people on how you will continue nuclear explosions or whether you will join our moratorium during the talks that we will start. But let us sit down for full-scale talks to work out an agreement on the total and final prohibition of nuclear explosions.

In passing, we will also consider the questions that you mention: verification, thresholds, number of nuclear explosions, and the 1974-1976 treaties. All this can be examined.

The positions were drawing closer. But when there occurred a rupture on the question of ABM, when all the discussion was broken off and the search was suspended, we stopped our meeting.

I think that we and the Americans should reflect on all this, and world public opinion should reflect on the situation that has evolved in the world in respect of the principal issue of concern to peoples of all countries—issues of war and peace, issues of the nuclear threat.

I think, and this is no exaggeration, that everything that we submitted to the President meets the interests of the American people and the peoples of all countries. If this does not seem to be true to someone, we are all eligible to say today: listen to the demands of American people, Soviet people, the peoples of all countries.

I came here for the meeting and said that it was time for action. This is truly so.

Indeed, the time to act has come, and we should not waste it. We shall act. We shall not give up our course towards peace, towards the struggle against the arms race, for banning nuclear weapons, for eliminating nuclear weapons and for diverting the threat from all of our planet. And I think that we shall not be alone in this struggle.

This is what I wanted to tell you now, right after the conclusion of the meeting. Perhaps I could say more, had I more time to ponder everything that has happened. It seems to me, however, that I expressed myself clearly and definitely on all questions.

I do not mention now that we dwelt on many other issues. We discussed humanitarian issues and dealt with concrete problems in that sphere. Two groups of experts were at work. You probably already know about that. One of them was headed from our side by Marshal of the Soviet Union, Chief of the General Staff Akhromeyev, and from the American side by Paul Nitze. They worked practically through the night.

The group on humanitarian issues was headed from our side by Deputy Foreign Minister Bessmertnykh, and from the American side by Assistant Secretary of State Ridgway.

There was an interesting exchange of opinions there too, and some understandings reached there could have been a component part of the final document. But since the main thing collapsed, the entire process ground to a standstill.

As you see, this was an interesting, important and promising meeting on the whole. But it has ended this way for the time being.

But let us not give way to despair. I think that this meeting has brought us to a very important stage of understanding where we are. And it has shown that accords are possible. I am sure of this.

Thank you.

Do you still have questions even after such a detailed speech delivered by me? Well, come up with them. Let us sit to the early hours.

QUESTION (Czechoslovak television): Mikhail Sergeyevich, you said that an historic chance has been lost here, in Reykjavik. When, do you think, will a new chance emerge?

ANSWER: You know I should like to give an optimistic answer to this. Because much was done on the eve of the meeting and at the meeting. If we again think over everything and display realism and responsibility both in the United States, in the White House and in our Soviet leadership, then the chance will not be lost to resolve these questions.

QUESTION (Japanese NHK TV company): Does this mean that the dialogue with the USA, with the Reagan Administration is still going on? Or do you think that possibilities are very small for a productive dialogue with Reagan?

ANSWER: I think that at present the need for the dialogue has become even greater, no matter how difficult it would be.

QUESTION (newspaper *Pravda*): Mikhail Sergeyevich, what do you think, why did the US Administration decide to wreck the negotiations, taking such an irresponsible decision and ignoring world public opinion?

ANSWER: I think that America has yet to make up its mind. I think it has not done this yet. This, as we felt, told on the President's stand.

QUESTION (Australian Radio Broadcasting Corporation): You said that President Reagan is a captive of the military industrial complex. Does this mean that the next two years will be sterile? Are you hopeful that the next US President will not to be a captive of this complex?

ANSWER: Irrespective of what the military-industrial complex is at present and irrespective of what place it holds in present-day America, let us not overestimate its possibilities. The final say is with the people of any country, including the American people.

QUESTION (Icelandic radio and television): After the negative result of the summit, will the Soviet Union counter the American SDI programme with something else and will it not launch its space arms programme full blast?

ANSWER: I think that you have understood the essence of the Soviet position. If now we have approached a stage at which we start a drastic cut in nuclear weapons, both strategic and medium-range missiles (we have already approached understanding with the Americans to do this in the next decade), we have the right to demand that we should be guaranteed in this period that nothing surprising and unforeseen will take place. This also includes such a sphere as space and deployment of a space-based ABM system.

I told the President (maybe I will slightly open the curtain over our exchange of opinions) that the SDI does not bother us militarily. In my opinion nobody in America, either, believes that such a system can be created. More, if America eventually decides to do this, our reply will not be symmetrical. True, I told him: Mr. President, you know that I have already been turned into your ally in the SDI issue. He was surprised by this. It turns out, I tell him, that since I so sharply criticise the SDI, this offers you a convincing argument that the SDI is needed. You just say: if Gorbachev is against, this means that it is a good thing. And you win applause and financing. True, cynics and sceptics have appeared who say: what if this is Gorbachev's crafty design—to stay out of the SDI and to ruin America. So you figure out this yourself. But we are not scared by the SDI in any case.

I say this with confidence, since it is irresponsible to bluff in such matters. There will be a reply to the SDI. An asymmetrical one, but it will be. And we shall not sacrifice much at that.

But what is its danger? For one thing, a political danger. A situation is created right away, which brings uncertainty and fans up mistrust for each other and suspicion. Then the reduction of nuclear weapons will be put aside. In short, quite another situation is needed for us to take up thoroughly the question of reducing nuclear weapons. Second, there is a military aspect after all. The SDI can lead to new types of weapons. We also can say this with competence. It can lead to an entirely new stage of the arms race which is unpredictable in its serious consequences.

It turns out that, on the one hand, we agree to start reduction of nuclear weapons—at present the most dangerous and dreadful—and, on the other, we should bless research and even conduct it in space, under natural conditions, so as to create the latest weapons. This does not agree with normal logic.

QUESTION (*Washington Post*): You have just held another meeting with President Reagan after two days of sessions. What is your impression of the President as a political figure? Do you believe that he shares your sense of responsibility for the destinies of the world?

ANSWER: My impression is that Mr. Reagan and I can continue the dialogue and engage in the quest for ways to resolve major pressing problems, including those I spoke about.

QUESTION (Danish television): Do the unsatisfactory results of the meeting mean that no progress will be achieved on the banning of nuclear tests and other problems which were discussed yesterday and today? Is this problem—the banning of nuclear tests—linked with other problems discussed at the sessions?

ANSWER: I have answered this question already. We do not believe that our contacts with Americans and with the President, much less international relations, have been broken off as a result of the latest developments. The quest is going on, and it will be further continued. And, in my opinion, there is even more reason for the developments that took place here, in Iceland, to become a powerful impetus that would make us all realise that we should join the common struggle for the normalisation of the international situation, for the quest for ways out of impasse situations, including those which were discussed here in Reykjavik. In fact, another impasse situation emerged here as well. However, I am an optimist.

QUESTION (GDR television): You said that the meeting had brought no results. Does this mean that it was useless? What do you think: has peace become more reliable after the Reykjavik meetings?

ANSWER: I think you have considered your question thoroughly. What I like about our German friends is the accuracy of expression, including the expression of thoughts. In my opinion, despite the fact that we concluded our meeting without reaching agreement on the problems to which we seemed to have found approaches, what happened in Reykjavik is deplorable and disappointing. However, the meeting can hardly be described as fruitless.

On the contrary, it is a new stage in a complicated and difficult dialogue in search of solutions. After all we are searching for far from easy solutions to difficult issues. For this reason let us not spread panic throughout the world. But at the same time, we should state that the world should know all that is going on and should not feel like an onlooker. The time has come for vigorous actions by all forces.

QUESTION (American TV company ABC): Mr. General Secretary, I don't understand why, when you had an opportunity to achieve with President Reagan agreement on cuts in nuclear weapons, the Soviet side did not agree to SDI research. You yourself said in Geneva that you were ready to pay a high price for nuclear arms cuts. And now, when you had such an opportunity, you missed it.

ANSWER: Your question contains an element of criticism, so I will answer it in some detail.

First, the US President came to Reykjavik with empty hands and empty pockets. The American delegation, I would say, brought us trash from the Geneva talks. It was only thanks to the far-reaching proposals of the Soviet side that we were about to reach most major agreements (they were not formalised, mind you) on cuts in strategic offensive weapons and on medium-range missiles. Naturally, we hoped in that situation—and I think it is perfectly clear to a politician, a military man and any normal person in general—that if we are to sign such agreements on major cuts in nuclear weapons, we should take care to ensure that there is nothing which could thwart that difficult process, towards which we had been moving for decades. And then we raised the question that we stood for strengthening the ABM Treaty. The American side is constantly burrowing under the ABM Treaty.

It has already called in question SALT-2 and would now like to stage a funeral of the ABM Treaty in Reykjavik, moreover with the participation of the Soviet Union and Gorbachev. That will not do. The world as a whole would not understand us, it is my conviction.

All of you who are sitting here, all of you are convinced that if we begin to attack the ABM Treaty in addition to everything else, the last mechanism which has contributed so much to constraining, in spite of everything, the process of the arms race, we are worthless politicians. But it is not enough to preserve its terms at a time when deep cuts in nuclear weapons are initiated. We think that the treaty must be strengthened. And we proposed a mechanism of strengthening it—not to use the right to pull out of the ABM Treaty during the ten years in which we will totally reduce and destroy the nuclear potentials in our countries.

At the same time, to ensure that neither the Soviet Union seeks to overtake America in space research and achieve military superiority nor America seeks to overtake the Soviet Union, we said that we agreed to laboratory research and testing but were opposed to the emergence, with that research and testing, of components of space-based ABM defences into outer space. This is our demand. Our demand in that case also was constructive and reckoning with America's stand. If she agreed, she would get an opportunity to resolve her problems within the framework of continued laboratory research but without attempts to develop space ABM defences. I think there is iron logic here, as the children say, and sometimes we should learn even from children.

Now let ladies have a chance.

QUESTION (*The Guardian*): Is the Soviet Union planning any new initiatives for Western Europe after what came to pass in Reykjavik?

ANSWER: I think Western Europe is hearing what I am saying and if she thinks over and closely studies our proposals, she will find them meeting her interests. We understand that we cannot be indifferent to the interests of Western Europe, in which the shoots of new thinking are taking root and in which responsibility is growing for the preservation and strengthening of our European home.

QUESTION (*Newsweek* magazine): What are your plans for a visit to Washington? You said that an agreement or two should be achieved before such a visit. Can such agreements be achieved before you come on a visit to Washington?

ANSWER: I think that in spite of the dramatic events of today, we are not farther from Washington but closer to it. If the President and the US Administration listen to my proposal to continue studying everything we discussed here in Reykjavik and keep counsel with those circles they think necessary to consult, I do not think everything is lost. There are opportunities to rely on what we had here in Reykjavik to reach agreements which will make a meeting in Washington real and possible, and it could produce results.

QUESTION (American TV company CNN): Mr. Gorbachev, you said in your speech that President Reagan should think over the situation and keep counsel with Congress and the American people. Do you think that American public opinion will back the Soviet approach?

ANSWER: We will wait and see.

QUESTION (*Rude Pravo*): I have a question to you as a politician and a lawyer. What do you think of human rights priorities in the nuclear-missile age and what role can the human factor play in deciding questions of war and peace?

ANSWER: You are a philosopher. I myself once studied philosophy and have now again turned to it. I think that when we discuss human rights, we should remember that the question of safeguarding peace and averting the nuclear threat from man today is the main priority. If there is peace, there will be life—and we will sort out problems in one way or another. There are more and more educated people in the world. I think the peoples will sort out everything. That is why when we discuss human rights, I will attach priority to man's right to live. This is the first point.

The second is the human factor. I believe that in the nuclear age (and I consider it a manifestation of new thinking) the threat of nuclear war gives a new dimension to the role of the human factor in the struggle for peace, for the prevention of war. Because today a war will affect everyone regardless of where it breaks out. It is only ill-wishers who see the hand of Moscow behind all the anti-war movements, all those who work for peace. Women, children and men of all ages are coming to the fore today, linking hands and demanding a stop to the dangerous tendency under which the world is advancing towards the threat of nuclear war. I think that the role of the human factor is growing immensely in this situation.

QUESTION (*Izvestia*): The White House has talked a good deal and often about the fact that the main danger to America is posed by the Soviet ICBM's. But we proposed in Reykjavik that this main danger to America be eliminated over ten years. What do you think of the reasons why the other side proved not ready to strike down this main danger and avert it from its country?

ANSWER: You are quite right to put this question. It was used by the American side over the years to claim that the Soviet Union was not serious about disarmament or ending the arms race, that it disregarded America's concern, etc.

As you see, we proposed radical reductions, and put the question very pointedly, moreover. There is the triad of strategic weapons recognised both by us and by the Americans. We suggested that all that triad of the strategic armed forces be cut by 50 per cent over the first five years. It was a major step.

Yet at the same time we told the Americans that we were concerned too, since a larger part of the strategic forces of the USA is deployed in submarines. There are nearly 700 missiles with almost 6,000 multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles. But submarines are known to plough the seas and oceans around the Soviet Union. Where will they launch their strike from? This is no less dangerous than heavy land-based missiles.

In short, when they do not want to come to grips with questions, they look for problems and raise artificial obstacles. But in our case those obstacles were removed. This is the important thing. We indeed took a very important step by dropping reservations on medium-range missiles, which have strategic importance to America. We also excluded from the count forward-based systems in our approach to strategic missiles. All

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Mikhail Gorbachev's speech on Soviet television

The General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, Mikhail Gorbachev, made the following televised speech in Moscow on October 14:

Good Evening, Dear Comrades,

As you know, my meeting with the President of the United States Ronald Reagan in Iceland ended the day before yesterday, on Sunday. A press conference on its results was held and televised. The text of my statement and my replies to journalists were published.

On returning home I consider it my duty to tell you how the meeting took place and how we evaluate what happened in Reykjavik.

The results of the meeting in the capital of Iceland have just been discussed at a meeting of the Political Bureau. A report will be published tomorrow on the opinion that our Party's leadership has formed about this major political event, the consequences of which, we are convinced, will be making themselves felt in international relations for a long time to come.

Before Reykjavik much was said and written about the forthcoming meeting. As usually happens in such situations, there was a maze of conjectures and views. That is natural. But there were speculations this time as well.

Now that the meeting is over its results are in the centre of attention of the world public. Everybody wants to know—what happened? What did it produce? What will the world be like after it?

We strove for the main questions of world politics—ending the arms race and nuclear disarmament—to be given top priority at the meeting in Reykjavik. And that is how it was.

What are the motives for our persistence in this matter? One can often hear abroad that the reason lies in our domestic difficulties. There is a thesis in Western calculations that the Soviet Union will not ultimately endure the arms race economically, that it will break down and will go bowing to the West. One should only press on it harder and shore up the position of strength. Incidentally, the US President made a remark to this effect already after our meeting.

I said more than once that such plans are not only built on sand, but are dangerous because they may result in fatal political decisions. We know our own problems better than others. We do have them, and we openly discuss and resolve them. On this score, we have our own plans and approaches, and there is a common will of the Party and the people. On the whole, I should say that the Soviet Union is strong today by its unity, political activity of the people and dynamism. I think that these trends, and therefore the strength of our society, will be growing.

We will always be able to stand up for ourselves. The Soviet Union has the capacity to respond to any challenge, if need be. Soviet people know this, and all people around the world should know this as well. But we are opposed to playing power games. This is an extremely dangerous undertaking in the nuclear-missile age.

We are firmly convinced that the protracted feverish state of international relations harbours the threat of a sudden and doomful crisis. Practical steps away from the nuclear abyss are required. Concerted Soviet-American efforts, efforts by the entire international community are required to improve radically international relations.

For the sake of these goals we, the Soviet leadership, carried out extensive preparatory work ahead of the meeting, even before we received the consent of President Reagan to attend it. Taking part in it, apart from the Political Bureau and Secretariat of the CPSU Central Committee, were the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Defence Ministry, other organisations, representatives of science, military experts, and specialists from various branches of industry. The positions that we worked out for the Reykjavik meeting were a result of broad and repeated discussions with our friends, with the leadership of countries of the socialist community. We sought to fill the meeting with principled content, with far-reaching proposals.

Now about the meeting itself, how events developed there. We must tell you about it not only for the sake of affirming the truth which is being distorted already by our partners in the Reykjavik talks, but also mostly for informing you of what we are going to do next.

The first conversation with President Reagan started on Saturday, at 10.30. After the greetings which are indispensable on such occasions and a short association with journalists, there remained only the two of us and the interpreters. We exchanged views on the general situation, on the way the dialogue between our two countries is developing, and outlined problems to be discussed.

Then I asked the President to listen to our

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this shows our goodwill. Yet the Americans did not meet us halfway.

The Americans think that they will achieve military superiority over us through outer space and realise the idea of one of their presidents, who said: he who will dominate outer space will dominate Earth. This shows that what we have to deal with is imperial ambitions.

But the world today is not what it once was. It does not want to and will not be the happy hunting grounds of either the United States of America or the Soviet Union. Every country has the right to a choice, to its own ideology, to its own values. If we do not recognise this, there are no international relations. What there is is chaos and the law of the fist. We will never agree to it.

America must be very nostalgic about olden times, when she was strong and militarily superior to us, as we all had emerged from the war economically weakened.

There must be nostalgia in America. Yet we should wish our American partners to come to grips with today's realities. They ought to do so too. Otherwise, if the Americans do not start thinking in today's terms and proceeding from today's realities, we will not make progress in our search for correct solutions.

QUESTION (Bulgarian television): I take it that the Geneva talks will not be stopped, and that the Soviet leadership is going to give instructions to the Soviet delegation to quest for ways to resolve the problems which have not been resolved so far.

ANSWER: You are right.

QUESTION: Do you think that after the Reykjavik meeting similar instructions will be given to the American delegation?

ANSWER: I hope it will be so.

QUESTION (CTK news agency): In what way, do you think, will the outcome of the Reykjavik meeting influence the all-European process?

ANSWER: In my opinion, the peoples of Europe will measure up to the situation as well in this very important moment. Time requires actions, not just eloquent statements which are not followed by anything concrete. The world is tired, it is fed up with empty talk, it needs real progress in the sphere of disarmament and the elimination of nuclear weapons. I believe that this trend will be getting more prominent. I am pinning special hope on the wisdom and sense of responsibility of the politicians and peoples of Europe.

QUESTION (American NBC television company): As I understand, you are directly calling on other members of the world community to act as a kind of a lobby in order to influence the United States and make it change its mind?

ANSWER: We know how developed lobbyism is in your country, how the political process works in America. Perhaps that is why it was difficult for the President to make a decision at this meeting.

But when the matter at hand is related to consolidating peace and undertaking real steps to this end, when concerted efforts are needed—this concerns all, not only the United States and the Soviet Union—then, I think, one should speak not about lobbyism, but about the sense of responsibility, the common sense of peoples, about the appreciation of today's peace and the need to protect it.

It is, therefore, insulting to accuse peoples or movements campaigning for peace of being lobbyists for the Soviet Union. The point at issue is that people uphold their political and civic stance.

QUESTION (Icelandic newspaper *Morgunbladid*): I publish a newspaper in Iceland. Was it hard for you to decide on coming to Reykjavik? For Iceland is a NATO member. At the same time, as is known, our government proposed proclaiming the north a nuclear-free zone, and I would like to know your attitude to this.

ANSWER: I would like to end the press conference with this subject and will use with pleasure the question put by a representative of the Icelandic press. I want to recall that it was the USSR which suggested Iceland as a possible venue for the meeting. That is why we had no difficulties whatsoever on this account.

I want to thank the Government of Iceland, the people of Iceland for using all their potential—human, organisational and material—for resolving all questions of arranging the meeting.

We are grateful for that, and we felt at ease here. I received much interesting information from Raisa Maximovna who had had many meetings in Iceland. They were all very interesting. We are pleased with the friendly atmosphere and the great interest in our country. We thank Iceland, the Icelandic Government for what they have done. We wish prosperity to your people.

As to the latter part of your question concerning the intention of your country's government to proclaim the north a nuclear-free zone—we welcome this.

Dear friends, thank you for your attention. I think that we have spent the time usefully. I wish you all the best. Good-bye. □

concrete proposals on principal questions which prompted our meeting. I already spoke at length about them during the press conference. Still, I will recall them in brief.

A whole package of major measures was submitted to the talks. These measures, once accepted, would usher in a new era in the life of mankind—the nuclear-free era. This makes up the essence of the radical turn in the world situation, the possibility of which was obvious and realistic. The point at issue was no longer the limitation of nuclear arms, as in the SALT-1, SALT-2 and other treaties, but the elimination of nuclear weapons within comparatively brief periods.

The first proposal concerned strategic offensive weapons. I expressed the readiness to reduce them by fifty per cent within the next five years. The strategic weapons on land, water and in the air were subject to halving. In order to make the accord easier, we agreed to a major concession by revoking our previous demands that the strategic equation include American medium-range missiles reaching our territory and American forward-based systems. We were also ready to take into account the US concern about our heavy missiles. We regarded the proposal on strategic arms in the context of their total elimination, as we suggested on January 15 this year.

Our second proposal dealt with medium-range missiles. I suggested to the President that both Soviet and American missiles of this class in Europe be fully eliminated. On this point as well we agreed to a substantial concession: we stated that, unlike our previous stand, the nuclear-missile weapons of Britain and France should not be taken into account. We proceeded from the need for paving the way to detente in Europe, for setting the European nations free from the fear of a nuclear catastrophe, and then going further—towards the elimination of all the nuclear weapons. You will agree that it was another bold step on our part.

Knowing beforehand what the objections could be, we said that we agreed to freeze missiles with a range of under 1,000 km and to immediately start talks on what is to be done with them in the future. As for the medium-range missiles in the Asian part of our country—this issue was invariably present in the "global version" of President Reagan—we suggested that talks be started immediately on this subject as well. As you see, on this problem too our proposals were serious and extensive permitting a radical solution of this problem as well.

The third question that I raised during my first conversation with the President and that formed an integral part of the package of our proposals, was the existing Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty and the nuclear test ban treaty. Our approach is as follows: since we are entering an entirely new situation, when a substantial reduction of nuclear weapons and their elimination in the foreseeable future will be started, it is necessary to protect oneself from any unexpected developments. We are speaking about weapons which to this day make up the core of this country's defences.

Therefore, it is necessary to exclude everything that could undermine equality in the process of disarmament, to preclude any possibility of developing weapons of a new type ensuring military superiority. We regard this stance as perfectly legitimate and logical.

And since that is so, we firmly stated the need for strict observance of the 1972 ABM Treaty of unlimited duration. Moreover, in order to consolidate its regime, we proposed to the President adopting a mutual pledge by the US and the Soviet Union not to use the right to pull out of the treaty for at least ten years while abolishing strategic weapons within this period.

Taking into account the particular difficulties which the administration created for itself on this problem—when the President personally committed himself to space weapons, to the so-called SDI—we did not demand the termination of work in this area. The implication was, however, that all provisions of the ABM Treaty will be fully honoured—that is, research and testing in this sphere will not go beyond laboratories. This restriction applies equally to the US and to the USSR.

In listening to us, the President expressed his remarks, asked for clarification on certain points. During the conversation, we resolutely and definitely raised the question of verification, linking it with the post-nuclear situation. This situation demands special responsibility. I said to the President that if both countries embark on nuclear disarmament, the Soviet Union will toughen its stance on verification. It should be real, comprehensive and convincing. It should create full confidence in reliable compliance with the agreement and should contain the right to on-site inspection.

I should tell you, comrades, that the President's first reaction was not entirely negative. He even said: "What you have just stated is reassuring." But it did not escape our attention that the interlocutors (Comrade Shevardnadze and George Shultz had already joined the conversation on these issues by then) were somewhat confused. Meanwhile, doubts and objections appeared right away in their separate remarks. The President and the Secretary of State started talking straight away about divergencies and disagreement. In their words we clearly discerned the familiar old sounds that we heard from the Geneva negotiations for many months: we were reminded of all sorts of sublevels on strategic nuclear armaments, the "interim proposal" on missiles in Europe and that we, the Soviet Union, should join the SDI and should have some new agreement in place of the existing ABM Treaty, and many other things in the same vein were voiced on their part.

I expressed surprise. Why so? We propose to accept the American "zero" in Europe and get down to negotiations on medium-range missiles in Asia while you, Mr. President, are abandoning your previous stand. This is incomprehensible.

As to ABM, we propose to preserve and strengthen this fundamental, important agreement, and you want to give it up and even propose to have it replaced with some new treaty, and thereby—following the departure from SALT-2—also to wreck this mechanism standing guard over strategic stability. This is incomprehensible too.

We grasped the essence of the SDI plans as well, I said. If the United States creates a three-tiered ABM system in outer space, we shall respond to it. However, we are concerned over another problem: the SDI would mean the transfer of weapons to a new medium, which would destabilise the strategic situation and make it even worse than today. If this is the purpose of the US, then this should be said plainly. But if you really want to have reliable security for your people and for the world in general, then the American stand is absolutely unsupportable.

I told the President directly: we have put forward new major proposals. However, what we hear from you now is exactly what everybody is quite fed up with and what cannot lead us anywhere. Please, Mr. President, attentively examine our proposals once again and give us an answer point by point. I handed him an English translation of a draft of possible instructions that was drawn up in Moscow and which, in case agreement was reached in principle, could be given to the foreign ministers and other agencies for drawing up three draft agreements. They could be signed later during my visit to the US.

In the afternoon we met again. The President announced the stand that was drawn up during the break. As soon as he uttered the first phrases, it became clear that they were offering us the same moth-balled old things, as I put it at the press conference, with which the Geneva talks were choking: various intermediate versions, figures, levels, sublevels and so on. There was not a single fresh thought, a fresh approach or an idea which would contain at least a hint of some solution, of some advance.

It was becoming clear, comrades, that the Americans had come to Reykjavik with nothing at all to propose. The impression was that they had come there to gather fruits into their basket, empty-handed.

A dramatic situation was shaping.

The American President was not ready to decide in a big way principled questions, to meet the Soviet side half-way so as to really give an impetus to resultful and encouraging negotiations. This is exactly what I urged the President in my letter, in which I put forward the idea suggesting that an urgent and undelayed meeting be held so as to give a powerful impetus at the level of the top leaders of the two countries—an impetus to negotiations on nuclear disarmament.

Being confident that our proposals are well-balanced, and take the partner's interests into account, we decided not to abandon our efforts to bring about a breakthrough at the meeting. A ray of hope on strategic armaments appeared, following many clarifying questions. Clutching at that, we made one more big step in search of a compromise. I told the President: there is a triad of strategic offensive armaments, recognised both by you and by us. Ground-based missiles, strategic submarines and strategic bombers. Well, let us have a 50 per cent reduction of each part of the triad. And then there will be no need of all sorts of levels and sublevels, of all sorts of calculations.

Following a long debate, we managed to reach mutual understanding on that issue.

Then the discussion started on the problem of medium-range missiles. The Americans firmly upheld the so-called intermediate version which provided for the preservation of part of their missiles, including Pershing-2 missiles, in Europe, and, naturally, the preservation of our relevant SS-20 missiles. We categorically opposed it, I have already explained why. Europe deserves to be rid of nuclear weapons, to stop being a nuclear hostage. As for the President, it was difficult for him to fight his own "zero option" which he had promoted for so long. And still, we felt the intention of Americans to wreck the agreement under the guise of their special concern for their allies in Asia.

A lot of untenable things were said by the American side. It is embarrassing to repeat them here. The talks began to advance further only when on this problem as well we made one more step towards the American side, and agreed to the following formula: zero missiles in Europe, 100 warheads on medium-range missiles in the eastern part of our country and, accordingly, 100 warheads on medium-range missiles in US territory. The most important thing was that we managed to agree on ridding the European continent of nuclear weapons.

Thus, accord was reached on the problem of medium-range missiles too. A major breakthrough was made in this direction of nuclear disarmament as well. The American Administration failed to hold out against our insistent striving for achieving positive results.

However, there still remained the ABM issue and the ban on nuclear explosions.

Two groups of experts from our and the American sides worked the whole night before we met the next day, Sunday, for our third conversation which was to become the concluding one in line with the programme. They thoroughly analysed what had been discussed at the two previous meetings with the President and reported the results of their night-time debates respectively to me and to the President.

The result was: there appeared a possibility of getting down to elaborating agreements on strategic offensive armaments and on medium-range missiles.

The ABM Treaty in this situation acquired key significance. Its role was becoming even more important. Could one wreck, I said, what has so far made it possible to somehow restrain the arms race? If we now start reducing strategic and medium-range nuclear weapons, both sides should be confident that over that time nobody will develop new systems which would undermine stability and parity. Therefore, in my view, it is absolutely logical to fix the time-frame—the Americans mentioned seven years, and we proposed ten years during which nuclear weapons ought to be eliminated. We proposed ten years during which neither the Soviet side nor the American side will avail itself of the right—and they have such a right—to withdraw from the ABM Treaty. And to conduct research and tests only in laboratories. Thus, I think, you understood why exactly ten years? This is not casual. The logic is simple and honest. Fifty per cent of strategic armaments are to be reduced in the first five years. And the other half—in the next five years. This makes it ten years.

In this connection I proposed to instruct our high-ranking representatives to start full-scale talks on the discontinuation of nuclear explosions in order to work out ultimately an agreement on their banning once and for all. In the course of the preparation of the agreement—and here we again displayed flexibility and assumed a constructive stand—specific problems connected with nuclear explosions could be simultaneously resolved.

In answer we again heard from President Reagan the reasoning which had been familiar to us since Geneva and from his public statements: that the SDI was a defence system, that if we started to eliminate nuclear weapons, how could we protect ourselves from some madman who might get hold of them, that he was ready to share with us the results obtained within the framework of the SDI. Answering this last remark, I said: Mr. President, I do not take seriously your idea of sharing with us the SDI developments. You do not want to share with us even oil equipment and equipment for dairy factories, and still you expect us to believe your promise to share SDI developments with us. It would be a kind of "second American revolution", and revolutions do not happen too often. I said to President Reagan: Let us be realists and pragmatists. It is more reliable this way. The things we are talking about are too serious.

By the way, yesterday, trying to justify his stand on the SDI, the President said that he needed the programme for America and its allies to remain invulnerable against a Soviet missile attack. As you see, in this case he already made no mention of madmen. The "Soviet threat" was again brought to light.

But this is nothing but a trick. We suggested that not only strategic armaments, but also all the nuclear armaments in the possession of the US and the USSR be eliminated under strict control.

Whence the need to protect the "freedom of America" and its friends from Soviet nuclear missiles if these missiles will be no longer?

If there are no nuclear weapons, why have protection against them? It means that the entire 'Star Wars' undertaking is of a purely militaristic character and is directed at gaining military superiority over the Soviet Union.

Let us return, however, to the talks. Although agreement on strategic arms and medium-range missiles was reached, it was premature to believe that all this was already finally resolved as a result of the two first sessions. A whole day was ahead, nearly eight hours of non-stop and intense discussions in which these questions, which seemed to be agreed upon already, had to be raised again and again.

In these discussions, the President sought to handle ideological problems as well, demonstrating, to put it mildly, total ignorance and inability to understand both the socialist world and what is taking place in it. I rejected the attempts to link ideological differences with questions of ending the arms race. I persistently drew the President and the Secretary of State back to the subject that brought us to Reykjavik. It was necessary to remind our interlocutors again and again about the third element of the package of our proposals, without which it was impossible to reach accord on the whole. I mean the need for strict compliance with the ABM Treaty, consolidating the regime of this major treaty and banning nuclear tests.

We had to draw attention again and again to what seemed to be perfectly clear things: since we agreed to effect deep reductions in nuclear arms, we should create a situation that would preclude attempts—both in deeds and in thoughts—to shake strategic stability, to circumvent the agreements.

That is why we should be confident about the preservation of the timeless ABM Treaty. You, Mr. President, I said, ought to agree that since we start reducing nuclear weapons, there should be firm confidence that the US will do nothing behind the back of the USSR, while the Soviet Union will not do behind the US's back anything that would jeopardise your security, that would depreciate the agreement and create difficulties.

Hence the key task to strengthen the ABM regime. Not to go into outer space with the results of work under this programme, to remain within laboratories. The ten years of not using the right to pull out of the ABM Treaty are necessary to create the confidence that, while resolving the problem of reducing arms, we ensure security for both sides, ensure worldwide security.

But the Americans obviously had other intentions. We saw that the US actually wants to weaken the ABM Treaty, to review it so as to develop a large-scale space-based ABM system for its own egoistic ends. To agree with this would be simply irresponsible on my part.

As to nuclear tests, here too it was totally clear why the American side did not want to conduct talks on this issue in earnest. It would have preferred to make them timeless, to put off the solution of the problem of banning nuclear tests for decades. And once again we had to reject attempts to use talks as a screen for a free hand in the field of nuclear explosions. I stated bluntly: I am having doubts about the honesty of the US position, is there anything in it that might inflict damage to the Soviet Union? How can one reach agreement on the elimination of nuclear arms if the United States continues perfecting them? Still we had the impression that the SDI was the main hitch. On removing it we would have had an opportunity to reach an accord on the banning of nuclear explosions as well.

At a certain stage of the talks when it became absolutely clear that to continue the discussion would be a waste of time, I reminded the other side: we have proposed a definite package of measures and I ask you to consider it as such. If we have worked out a common position on the possibility of a major reduction of nuclear arms and at the same time failed to reach agreement on the matter of SDI and nuclear tests, then everything that we have tried to create here falls apart.

The President and the Secretary of State took our firmness badly. But I could not pose the question in a different way. This concerned the security of our country, the security of the whole world, all peoples and continents.

We proposed major, really wide-ranging things, clearly of the nature of a compromise. We made concessions. But on the American side we did not see even the slightest desire to respond in kind, to meet us halfway. We were deadlocked. And we began thinking about what to conclude the meeting with. Yet we continued the efforts to make our partners engage in a constructive dialogue.

The conversation that was planned to be the concluding one found itself in time trouble. In this situation, instead of parting—we back to Moscow and they to Washington—yet another interval was announced. Let the sides think everything over and meet once again after lunch. On returning to the house of the city's mayor after the break we made yet another attempt to make the meeting end in success. We proposed the following text as the basis for summing up a positive result.

Here is this text:

"The USSR and the United States would undertake in the course of ten years not to use their right to withdraw from the timeless ABM Treaty and in the course of this period strictly to observe all of its provisions. It is prohibited to test all space elements of an ABM defence in outer space except for research and testing conducted in laboratories.

"In the course of the first five years of this decade (till 1991 inclusive) the strategic offensive arms of the sides will be reduced by 50 per cent.

"In the course of the subsequent five years of this period the remaining 50 per cent of the strategic offensive arms of the sides will be reduced.

"Thereby, the strategic offensive arms of the USSR and the United States will be fully liquidated by the end of 1996."

Commenting on this text, I made an important addition, referring to the document which had been handed over to the President at the end of our first conversation. The point is that upon the expiration of ten years, when there are no nuclear weapons any longer, we propose to elaborate at special negotiations mutually acceptable decisions on what to do next.

But this time, too, our attempts to come to terms were to no avail. For four hours we were again trying to persuade the interlocutors that our approach was well-founded, that it threatened them with nothing, and did not affect the interests of the genuine security of the United States. But the farther, the clearer it became that the Americans would not agree to limit SDI research, developments and tests to laboratories. They are bent on going to outer space with weapons.

I said firmly that we would never agree to help undermine the ABM Treaty with our own hands. This is to us a question of principle, a question of our national security.

Thus, being virtually one, two or three steps from taking decisions which could become historic for the whole nuclear-space era, we were unable to make that step or those steps. No turning point in the world's history occurred. Though, I say it again with full confidence, it was possible.

However, our conscience is clear, and no one can reproach us with anything. We did all we could.

The scope of approach of our partners was not broad enough. They did not have enough understanding of how unique the moment was, and ultimately they did not have enough courage, sense of responsibility and political resolve which are needed so much during the solution of pressing key world problems. They remained on old positions which time had eroded already and which did not correspond to present-day realities.

Foreigners asked me there in Iceland and my comrades ask me here: what, in my opinion, are the root causes of this attitude of the American delegation at the Reykjavik meeting? There are a number of causes, both subjective and objective ones. However, the main cause is that the leadership of this great country excessively depends on the military-industrial complex, on the monopolistic groups which have turned the nuclear and other arms race into business, into a way of

making profits, into the objective of their existence and the meaning of their activities.

In my opinion, the Americans are making two serious mistakes in their assessment of the situation.

The first one is a tactical mistake. They believe that the Soviet Union will sooner or later reconcile itself to the attempts of the revival of American strategic *diktat* and will agree to the limitation only of Soviet weapons, to the reduction only of Soviet weapons. It will do so because, as they think, it is interested in disarmament agreements more than the US. But this is a profound delusion. The quicker the US Administration overcomes it—I am repeating this perhaps for the hundredth time—the better it will be for them, for our relations, for the world situation in general.

The other mistake is a strategic one. The United States wants to exhaust the Soviet Union economically through the build-up of sophisticated and costly space arms. It wants to impose hardships of all kinds on the Soviet leadership, to foil its plans, including in the social sphere and the sphere of improving our people's living standards, and thus foment discontent among the people with their leaders, with the country's leadership.

Another aim is to restrict the Soviet Union's possibilities in its economic ties with developing countries which, in this situation, would all be compelled to go cap in hand to the United States. These are far-reaching designs. The strategic course of the current administration also rests on delusions. Washington, it seems, does not wish to burden itself with a thorough analysis of the changes taking place in our country, does not wish to draw corresponding practical conclusions for itself, for its course, but is engaged in wishful thinking. On the basis of this delusion, it is building its policy in respect to the USSR.

It is not, of course, difficult to predict all long-term consequences of such a policy. One thing is already clear to us: it will not bring, it cannot bring anything that is positive to anyone, including the United States.

Before addressing you, I read the US President's statement on Reykjavik. It is noteworthy that the President ascribes all the proposals discussed to himself. Well, these proposals are probably so attractive for the Americans and the peoples around the world that one resorts to such a ruse. We are not consumed with vanity. But it is important that people get the truthful picture of what happened in Reykjavik.

And what is next? I already said at the press conference that the work which had been done before the meeting, and there in Reykjavik, would not be in vain. We ourselves considered much in connection with that meeting and reconsidered much. We have now cleared better the way to launching further struggle for peace and disarmament. We freed ourselves from obstructions that had formed, from petty things, from stereotypes which fettered new approaches in that important area of our politics.

We know where we stand and see our possibilities more clearly. The preparations for the Reykjavik meeting helped us formulate a platform—a new, bold platform which adds to the chances for ultimate success. It meets the interests of our people and society at the new stage of its socialist development. This platform also meets the interests of all other countries and nations and thereby deserves confidence. We are confident that it will be received with understanding in many countries of the world and in the most different political and public circles.

I think that many people in the whole world, including leaders vested with power can and must draw serious conclusions from the Reykjavik meeting. All will have to think again and again what the matter is, why such persistent efforts to achieve a breakthrough and start advancing to a non-nuclear world, to universal security are so far failing to produce the needed result.

I should like to hope that the President, too, now has a better insight into the course of our analysis, the intentions of the Soviet Union, the possibilities and limits of adjustments in the Soviet stand. More precise and fuller since Mr. Reagan received first-hand explanations of our constructive steps to promote stabilisation and improvement of the international situation.

The American leadership will obviously need some time.

We are realists and we clearly understand that the questions which had remained unresolved for many years and even decades can hardly be resolved at a single sitting. We have quite a lot of experience in doing business with the US. We know how quickly the domestic political climate can change there, how strong and influential opponents of peace across the ocean are. There is nothing new in it for us.

And if we are not despairing, if we do not slam the door and give vent to our emotions, although there is more than enough reason for it, this is because we are sincerely convinced of the need for new efforts aimed at building normal interstate relations in the nuclear epoch. Any other way just does not exist.

Another thing: after Reykjavik, the infamous SDI has become more conspicuous as a symbol of obstruction in the way of peace, as a concentrated expression of militaristic designs and the unwillingness to avert the nuclear threat looming large over mankind. It is impossible to perceive it otherwise. This is the most important lesson of the Reykjavik meeting.

In summing up these eventful days, I would say the following. The meeting was a major event. A reappraisal took place. A qualitatively new situation developed. No one can act any longer as he acted before. The meeting was useful. It prepared a possible step forward, toward a real shift for the better, should the US adopt, finally, realistic positions and give up delusions in appraisals.

It convinces us of the correctness of the path chosen, of the necessity and constructiveness of the new mode of political thinking in the nuclear age.

We are full of energy and determination. Having embarked on restructuring, the country has already traversed a certain path. We have just started the process, but there are already changes. Industrial production growth over the past nine months amounted to 5.2 per cent, labour productivity grew by 4.3 per cent, the national income showed a 3.7 per cent rise compared with the previous year. All these indicators are above plan assignments for this year. This is the mightiest support on the part of our people, since all this is the result of our people's work, the mightiest support for the Party's policy—support by deeds.

This shows that the people's work in the new conditions helps accelerate the build-up of the country's economic potential and thus consolidates its defence capabilities.

The Soviet people, the Soviet leadership are unanimous that the policy of socialism can and should be a policy of peace and disarmament. We shall not swerve from the course of the 27th CPSU Congress. □

Reykjavik: US side not ready for nuclear disarmament

SOBER-MINDED American legislators are not concealing their deep disappointment at the failure of the Soviet-American summit in Reykjavik to produce tangible agreements, due to the American side's recalcitrance.

"It was a sad day for mankind," Senator Claiborne Pell told Associated Press on Monday. "In essence," he said, "we have given up a bird in the hand—the reduction in strategic offensive weapons—for two in the bush—SDI."

The Senator expressed the hope that President Reagan would change his mind about the Soviet offer.

Senator Gary Hart, a Democrat considered to be a potential presidential candidate in 1988, told the *New York Times:* "It appears that building 'Star Wars' is more important to this administration than meaningful arms control."

The real opportunity to curb the arms race, which opened up at the meeting in Reykjavik, has been lost because of Reagan's stubborn wish to press ahead with the implementation of the 'Star Wars' programme. This was the statement made on Monday by prominent American Democrat, Senator Edward Kennedy.

"That grand and historic opportunity was there in Iceland, but it has been sacrificed—at least for the moment—on the uncertain altar of SDI."

Criticism of the US stand at Reykjavik has also come from a former US Secretary of Defense. Harold Brown has said that President Reagan ought to display greater flexibility over the question of the 'Strategic Defense Initiative', which is known to have become the main obstacle to reaching tangible accords in the field of arms control.

William Uri, specialist on Soviet-American relations at Harvard University, said on Monday that the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev had displayed in Reykjavik a striving for a serious compromise in arms limitation and reduction. The US had had, as a result, an unprecedented opportunity to reach an arms control agreement. Regrettably the opportunity had been missed.

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"Obviously a result of historic importance was within reach," Hans-Jochen Vogel, chairman of the Social Democratic parliamentary group in the Bundestag, stated in Bonn on Monday.

He stressed that no result had been achieved because of the US President's insistence that the SDI programme go beyond the framework of research within the coming ten years and be tested in space, thus violating the limitations imposed by the ABM Treaty.

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Giovanni Spadolini, Political Secretary of the Italian Republican Party and Italy's Defence Minister, noted yesterday that the results of the Reykjavik meeting, which—as everyone hoped—were not complete and final, gave the Europeans food for thought.

"One point should be specially emphasised for us Europeans," he wrote. "Since the division was not on the issue of the European missile arsenals—the area where even a measure of success was achieved at the talks—all this again brings problems of European security into the fore and makes the countries of the old world seek more durable and efficient forms of solidarity and co-operation than those that existed in the past."

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Austrian Foreign Minister Peter Jankovitsch has said that, following the Soviet-US summit in Reykjavik, it has become very important "not to destroy bridges but to preserve and amplify all positive aspects, despite the disappointing results of the meeting."

He expressed the conviction that those results "have put added responsibility on all countries that consider it their duty to ensure peace, and set new tasks to them." □

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