

Mikhail Gorbachev's speech at reception in New Delhi

Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, made the following speech on Tuesday at a dinner given in his honour in New Delhi by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi of India:

Mr Prime Minister,
Mrs Gandhi,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Friends,
Comrades,

I have already had an opportunity to express our heartfelt gratitude to the Government of India and to the Prime Minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, for the invitation to visit your country.

I also thank you, Mr Prime Minister, for the kind words you have just said, addressed to our people and our country. We are grateful to India's leaders and to its official and public figures for the high assessment of Soviet efforts and initiatives in the cause of peace. We know that this is more than just an expression of courtesy.

Efforts to ensure a steady development of friendly relations with India have been, and will remain, a priority area in our entire foreign policy. Regular Soviet-Indian summit meetings are a major factor in our relations. Such meetings are invariably marked by an atmosphere of genuine trust, of understanding each other's concerns and intentions, both domestic and international. My meeting today with the Prime Minister confirms this assessment. I hope that we are equal to the task of continuing the good tradition started by Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi, imparting to it new content prompted by the imperatives of our time.

And the time we live in is difficult, and I would even say critical. Will mankind continue along the road of power confrontation, as regrettably it has done before, a road that would eventually lead to a catastrophe, or will it have enough wisdom, courage and strength to break this inertia and steer the world to a road of continuous survival, of progress and elimination of social evils and maladies?

My recent meeting with President Reagan in Reykjavik has brought into sharp focus both the potential for progress towards a nuclear-free world and the obstacles and forces that block that progress.

Indeed, we are witnessing an exponential growth in scientific and technological discoveries and innovations. The potential for peace and social progress is, in objective terms, also growing and gaining momentum.

At the same time, the nuclear threat continues

to hang over mankind. Peaceful coexistence is being subjected to harsh tests. Every day armed conflicts and acts of terrorism take a toll of human lives. Suffering and devastation have become an everyday reality for many peoples. The chains of militarism hold up progress. The arms race devours the resources that are so badly needed to solve the burning problems affecting the lives of hundreds of millions of peoples.

The situation calls urgently for a new approach to security issues, a new thinking in politics and a new philosophy in international relations. Survival of mankind must be placed above all other interests, and the security of any one state is inconceivable without security for all.

A few words about Soviet-Indian co-operation. Last year in Moscow, the Prime Minister and I laid the groundwork for its further development in all areas. Today we have continued this work and agreed on important things. There is every reason for Soviet-Indian relations not only to remain good but to make constant headway on the solid foundation of mutual respect, mutual benefit and common aspirations for peace. There is every possibility for making our mutual trust and friendship a still more influential factor in international life for the benefit of peace, disarmament and development.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends,

We are following with great interest current developments in the life of new India. We are gratified to see your accomplishments. But we also see your difficulties and problems.

The Government of India has put before its people a momentous task: to assure that the country enters the 21st century as a highly developed nation with a powerful economic, scientific and technological potential. The Soviet people sincerely wish you success. They wholeheartedly welcome the fact that the role of peace-loving India in world affairs is growing steadily.

May I express the confidence that this Soviet-Indian meeting will produce many positive results for the peoples of our two countries and for the strengthening of international security in Asia and in the world.

In conclusion, I would like to wish good health and success to the Prime Minister of the Republic of India, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, and to Mrs Gandhi, and well-being and prosperity to the great people of India.

May the friendly Soviet-Indian relations strengthen and develop for the benefit of our peoples and peace in the whole world! □

Mikhail Gorbachev's statement on arrival

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV arrived in New Delhi on Tuesday, on an official friendly visit at the invitation of Prime Minister of India Rajiv Gandhi and the Indian Government. Upon arrival he made the following statement:

Esteemed Mr Prime Minister,
Esteemed Mrs Gandhi,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Friends,

My first words on Indian soil are words of gratitude to Mr Rajiv Gandhi for the invitation and to you all for the warm welcome and good wishes.

At the moment of meeting with India I want to convey friendly greetings from the people of the Soviet Union to the great Indian people.

My visit shows, first of all, the invariability of our principled policy of friendship and co-operation with your country. Relations between India and the USSR already have quite a long record and lasting traditions. They mutually enrich and serve the interests of the two peoples.

Following an upward trend, these relations have been at all stages a factor of international stability and peace. This is how it was in the past and this is how it is nowadays.

The beneficial energy which is contained in Soviet-Indian co-operation is due to the fact that

the co-operation is based on trust, equality, respect, a considerate attitude to each other's peculiarities, and on due regard for each other's interests.

The co-operation is also based—and this is very important, too—on the fact that these interests are not counterposed to each other, and are not directed against the real, legitimate interests of other countries.

At the present stage, when both the Soviet Union and India are tackling large-scale tasks in their internal development, tasks of historic importance, Soviet-Indian ties and contacts are in need of being lent a still greater dynamism.

This is also essential to world politics in the present-day complex and dangerous international situation.

The problems mankind is now faced with are immense, and the dangers confronting mankind are great: the nuclear threat and the problem of survival, the difficulties and misfortunes of the developing countries, West-East, North-South—that is, contradictions between various types of socio-political systems and the levels of their development, regional and inter-nation crises and conflicts, the problems of food, energy and the environment.

I think that all these complexities of the present-day world will be touched upon to this or that degree in our conversations and talks.

And of course matters of Soviet-Indian relations in all their aspects, and the topical

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Mikhail Gorbachev's interview with Indian journalists

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, met a group of Indian journalists in the Kremlin on November 21 in connection with his forthcoming visit to India, and replied to their questions.

The panel of journalists consisted of Saeed Naqvi, Indian television news analyst, A. Balu, special correspondent of the Press Trust of India (PTI), K G Joglekar, special correspondent of the United News of India (UNI), and Harish Avasthi, Director-General of All India Radio.

Mikhail Gorbachev: I would like to begin by saying that I am looking forward with much interest to a meeting with India.

The Soviet people have special sentiments for India. We consider the Indian people to be our old friends and reliable partners. We are happy with the way our relations are shaping up. I have already had a chance to say so and I want to repeat that relations with India are a priority in our foreign policy. I think we can say, too, that the foreign policy of the Soviet Union, the Soviet leadership with regard to India takes account of the profound sentiments of friendship our peoples have for the Indian people.

We, for our part, constantly sense in the Indian Government's policy that it, too, is marked by the desire to reflect those profound sentiments for our people that Indian society, the Indian people have. In my view, it is the most important, the most lasting aspect of our relations—what I mean is tradition, many-years friendship and co-operation in bilateral and international affairs.

Finally, there is a legal base for these relations—the 1971 treaty. What I would also like to note today is the great importance of another factor of the development of these relations in the past, today and, I hope, in the future. What I mean is the continuous intensive and constructive political dialogue between the leaders of our countries.

Respect for the Indian people was what motivated Lenin when he farsightedly predicted India's role in international affairs. That idea of Lenin's nurtured our policy line and practical actions towards India. Many generations of Soviet and Indian leaders have worked hard so that we could see our relations at such a level today.

I would like to mention Jawaharlal Nehru. His memory is revered in our country and his contribution to the development of our relations is highly valued.

The Soviet Union and India, which represent the world of socialism and the world of national liberation and development, have been fruitfully co-operating over the years, over the decades in the interests of their peoples and in the interests of all the peoples. It is a good example. We want these relations to develop further, and this is the main thing.

So I am looking forward to a meeting with India. Now I would like to conclude this brief address to Indian listeners, readers and TV viewers by cordially greeting them on behalf of all the peoples of the Soviet Union.

Now let us go over to business.

QUESTION: Mr Gorbachev, we were closely following your journey from Geneva to Reykjavik. They are significant landmarks. What is your idea of the road ahead?

ANSWER: You have asked the most important question to all of us. A year has passed since the Geneva meeting.

I am now convinced that Geneva was very important. Geneva made it possible to restore the broken-off political dialogue between the leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States of America. That was important in itself. If there is dialogue, there is a better understanding

of each other's positions. If there is dialogue, quests are going on. Anyway, this is the first thing that can be counted on the positive side of Geneva.

There were important agreements. What I mean is the final document. It said, *inter alia*: nuclear war must not be fought and there can be no winners in it. It was a very important political statement. And it is the answer to all those who are dreaming about or at least recognising the possibility of small, limited, local nuclear wars. If the leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States agree that nuclear war is inadmissible, it is a very important point of departure for the formulation of a new policy that would be in accord with the nuclear-space age.

There was one more important statement: the sides will not seek military superiority. If we respect that accord, then, anyway, both sides should think not of seeking military superiority but of getting down to disarmament on the basis of equality.

The Soviet leadership has stood by the commitments it assumed in Geneva.

I want to cite some facts to make this point. It is important to state this, too, because they have not lost their relevance today.

We have extended our moratorium more than once since Geneva. On January 15 we offered the whole world a broad 15-year programme for the stage-by-stage reduction of nuclear weapons to the point of their total elimination by the year 2000. Moreover, our proposals since Geneva contain, we think, very important ideas on other aspects of the struggle against the arms race. What I mean is Stockholm, where we made constructive proposals as well. They made it possible to end that important forum successfully. I think highly of the significance of Stockholm. We furthermore contributed substantially to advancing towards agreements on the planning and elimination of chemical weapons.

All this has taken place since Geneva.

Finally, last summer we made jointly with other socialist countries major proposals on cuts in conventional armaments and armed forces. What I have just mentioned is enough to show that the Soviet leadership has acted responsibly since Geneva. But there was no real progress on nuclear weapons, on the scaling down of the nuclear arms race. I mean primarily the Geneva talks on these problems, which were virtually deadlocked. But even in that situation we acted constructively and responsibly. I offered the President, in view of the situation of deadlock at Geneva, to meet without delay, leaving aside all business. What business can be more important when the fate of the world, the fate of human civilisation is at stake! It was necessary to evaluate what was taking place in Geneva and give a fresh impetus to those talks so as to get the entire process moving.

I want to say that we appreciated President Ronald Reagan's accepting our proposal. This was important in itself. We do not want to take all the credit. There would have been no meeting if there had not been consent and willingness on the part of the US President.

Immediately after the Reykjavik meeting I said at a press conference: with all the drama of that meeting, it led us to new frontiers in the understanding of problems, and first and foremost demonstrated that agreements, even on

difficult problems, were possible. I stand by this statement today. That was the most important meaning of Reykjavik.

I regret our partners' causing confusion and a mess in the minds of people about the results of Reykjavik, not only in America but all over the world. But the President and the incumbent administration as a whole do not seem free to make decisions.

I have said and want to repeat: let America think, let it weigh everything and let it take a responsible decision.

All our proposals are still standing. But we want to move on forward. There are opportunities for such a movement. They have been opened, the world as a whole has seen them and wants that movement. But we are being pulled backwards, away from Reykjavik. And the American Administration has altogether forgotten what we talked about in Reykjavik, or rather is making believe that other things were under discussion there.

But there are in European countries, too, politicians who have become scared by such fast and strong advance by the Soviet Union and the United States in their search for accords both on strategic and on medium-range missiles. Now they would like to return again to all that which killed—well, not killed but rendered ineffective—the Geneva talks.

Our main task, the task of the Soviet Union and the Soviet leadership, as we see it is to preserve everything positive achieved in Reykjavik and finish the building whose foundation bricks were laid there.

QUESTION: It is claimed in some circles that SDI is so important, even decisive to American science and technology that it simply cannot be subject to negotiation. This is not my view, but there is a powerful lobby pushing the idea. What is your opinion?

ANSWER: Generally speaking, every new weapon advances technology to some extent. That is obvious. But I want to put it differently. Let us think about the price that America and the world have to pay for those technological achievements which the current administration is going to get by launching another round of the arms race and developing space weapons, which can lead the world to the brink of unpredictable consequences.

Can you in India agree to this price? The whole of sensible mankind cannot agree to such a price just so that American industry and science can scale some technological summits.

And cannot those technological and scientific summits be scaled through a peaceful space exploration programme? This is just what we propose. The Soviet Union has tabled such a proposal in the United Nations.

We are in a position to judge this with competence. We are on first-name terms with space, so to speak, we have long been working in the field, co-operating with India in particular.

If this is so, if technological breakthroughs can be achieved through peaceful space exploration, through international co-operation in the field, the question to ask is what is the true interest of the current administration behind SDI? The point is not technology. Large numbers of scientists in America and all over the world understand this.

The American Administration and the military-industrial circles in the US want to overtake the Soviet Union and to achieve military superiority through outer space. America is not happy with strategic parity and equal security. Johnson said in his day that the

nation which dominated space would also dominate the Earth. It is an obsession with politicians and bosses of the military-industrial complex. This is the crux of the matter, and we cannot agree to it. I don't think anyone can agree to it. Also, they are trying to wrap this SDI project in packaging that pretends the economy and ultimately the people will stand to gain. But this is a lie. Moreover, it is not only a lie but the main obstacle in the way of agreements which we were about to reach in Reykjavik.

Militarily SDI means another round of the arms race, a breakthrough to weapons of new types, to space weapons. Clearly, it will not lower international tension but will push it up even higher. Politically, if the SDI programme is carried through what is the point of conducting talks at all? And who will agree to make the task of the military-industrial complex and militaristic adventurists easier? SDI will destabilise the strategic situation and, far from strengthening trust, will subvert it even more. It will sow suspicion. Uncertainties will worsen. In that situation rash decisions can be taken. That is why the Americans and the world community as a whole should weigh up everything and realise where SDI is pushing the world.

Finally, the economic aspect of SDI is important as well. It is a voracious monster. According to American figures, at least one trillion dollars will be spent on it, whereas other estimates put the figure at two trillion dollars. It will hit America and those countries which will have to take part in that race as well. Lastly, the problems and needs of the developing world will remain. And those problems are crying out for attention. I think that the American people themselves, the Soviet people and the world community should reject this plan.

SDI does not scare us. We have thought out what we should do if the Americans keep working on SDI. But it will not be our choice. America is pushing the world towards unpredictable consequences. And the world should know this.

We value India's position very much. I must say that, in these months of pointed struggle over the way which the world should follow, the voice of peace-loving India is a factor of immense importance and a great asset.

We know and appreciate the position of the Delhi Six. I want to say that we have received all their addresses and replied to them. The Soviet Union shares the worry of India, of the Delhi Six, and is prepared to co-operate in a search for solutions to these urgent problems.

QUESTION: In your televised statement on October 22 and in recent remarks by Mr Shevardnadze there was a glimmer of hope, in spite of the American Administration's attempts to retreat from Reykjavik and in spite of the current complex situation in general. Today you are sounding more disappointed, I would say. Am I right? You are more angry, more outraged today than you were recently.

ANSWER: I would like my tone to convey worry. My positions remain the same. I, like all my colleagues in the Soviet leadership, am very worried lest the results of Reykjavik are drowned in a stream of discourses, unimportant and trifling, the purpose of which is not to let this process emerge on to a straight path to a better world but to befuddle public opinion and detract from the results of the meeting. This worry explains my tone. But we are incorrigible optimists. We are committed to a policy of peace and we will yet do a good deal to preserve and advance this process. But, as the saying goes, a bridge must be built from both sides.

QUESTION: You are speaking about the need for new thinking and new approaches in international politics. We are very much interested in your statements in this vein, such as your speech in Vladivostok. How does all this show in Soviet policy in Asia?

ANSWER: That is an interesting, important and very significant question.

Our new thinking, as we understand it, is based on the realities of our age. We are all in one boat. The nuclear-space age has faced all of us, not just some individual countries, with the problem of human survival. It is our common problem. That is why we address in our foreign policy the international community as a whole. It is our common task to save human civilisation from nuclear catastrophe.

Or take ecological problems. They are staring us full in the face. These problems, too, can be resolved only through co-operation among all countries. The problems of poverty, underdevelopment and backwardness of whole continents cannot be left untended and unresolved. They are banging on the doors and windows of world politics, so to speak.

We are all different, each professing a certain ideology, recognising one political system or another and following one system of religious beliefs or another. All this is so. Nevertheless, we are all very dependent on one another today. Hence, we should think differently. We should search vigorously for approaches to building new international relations.

I think that all of this process is unrealistic without the energetic contribution of the peoples and countries of such an immense continent as Asia. Indeed, Asia is India, China, the Soviet Union, billions of people, many nations and states. Incidentally, after exchanges of views with Mr Rajiv Gandhi, with whom we talked these problems over twice, I think we reached the following understanding: however difficult this process in Asia may be (and it is really far from easy), we nevertheless have to launch a search for new solutions in that continent on the entire front. I tried to put our idea of it across in the Vladivostok speech. We have now energised a political dialogue with many countries in Asia, with small and medium-sized countries too. We, naturally, count on India's great contribution and on our co-operation here. We are making our ideas of the Asian process known to China as well.

We recognise that every country has the right to choose independently and to decide its destiny, political system and state structure. This should be the point of departure. And we reject any attempt at intervention in the affairs of countries and their internal processes. We see how difficult it is, always involving struggle and obstacles. We are on the side of the peoples looking for ways of resolving their national problems. No one can deny them this right.

Our foreign policy in Asia, too, relies on these principles.

There are regional problems. We want them to be resolved and settled by political means. We think it will be a very difficult and long process but it is inevitable and necessary. Once more: the path world development as a whole will take will depend to a large extent on processes in the Asian continent. We can have a more detailed discussion of the subject in New Delhi.

QUESTION: You are giving this interview on the eve of your visit to New Delhi. Would you now speak about Indian-Soviet relations? What is your view of these relations and their development since the time of Jawaharlal Nehru? And what is their influence on international politics today?

ANSWER: I touched upon these problems to some extent at the start. But I will elaborate on what I said, as this subject is always in the focus of our attention and in the centre of our foreign policy activity.

Relations between the Soviet Union and India really are immensely valuable in themselves, not only to our two peoples but to the world as a whole. We are happy with our relations. We are conducting a very active and meaningful political dialogue in the spirit of profound mutual understanding. It has been characteristic of the entire

period since Jawaharlal Nehru, and was continued under Indira Gandhi, and I am very glad that this active and meaningful dialogue is now going on between the current leaders of the Soviet Union and India. I think that we have every reason to say today that our co-operation in the economy and trade also is an important sphere of Soviet-Indian relations. I do not want to go into figures and specifics now but throughout the years since India's independence we have been co-operating fruitfully in the economy. Dozens of enterprises are living monuments to this co-operation and the best argument for its efficiency. We have a prospect for co-operation in the most advanced industries.

Large-scale programmes in information science, computer technology and mechanical engineering are now being carried out in the USSR. They will also help broaden our possibilities for co-operation with India. We will make some decisions, I will not say now which, during the visit.

We have always had much respect for the fight of the Indian people for independence, we have supported India's course of peace and always shared her concerns over strengthening her defences.

Our contacts in science, technology, culture and tourism are now developing on a very broad scale. All this brings our peoples closer and makes their friendship stronger.

We have had some problems in trade exchanges but now the Soviet and Indian sides are working constructively and trade will grow.

I think that our co-operation and Soviet-Indian relations as a whole have a good future. The way relations with India should be built is clear to us. We view India as our great friend and value her immense contribution to the world process in every field.

QUESTION: Mr General Secretary, I would like to turn your attention to Soviet-Indian friendship, to the treaty between our countries which was signed 15 years ago. Should one regard this treaty as an important document in the light of the current international situation?

ANSWER: Yes, I think the importance of that treaty goes beyond Soviet-Indian relations.

Naturally, the first thing we thought about when we signed that treaty was the interests of India and the Soviet Union. This is understandable. However, the development of co-operation on the basis of that treaty, and those frontiers which we have reached in fulfilling the provisions of that important document, enable me today to say that these relations and therefore the treaty itself are a good example for other countries. Now that we are discussing the search for ways of improving the international situation and strengthening the principles of peaceful coexistence with different social systems, this example of co-operation and relations between states is a great asset to mankind as a whole.

We have been co-operating fruitfully over so many years; we have not lost our independence and nor has India lost anything or surrendered any of her independence. But we have gained a great deal. And our relations have become a powerful factor in international politics.

The treaty is not history. It is the present day, the living practice of our time.

QUESTION: Mr General Secretary, you spoke of Soviet-Indian relations. But I would also like to hear your suggestions for closer economic and scientific co-operation between our two countries.

ANSWER: Let us leave this question till New Delhi. When we have discussed everything, Mr Gandhi and I will tell you everything. Let us not outrun ourselves. It will be all the more interesting to you if our accords are presented by both sides. I hope to see you at the press conference and let us agree here and now that you will ask this question.

QUESTION: You said at the 27th CPSU Congress about the Soviet Union's intention of withdrawing from Afghanistan. Then you announced in Vladivostok the withdrawal of a part of the contingent of Soviet troops. What is your view of the situation in Afghanistan at present?

ANSWER: We have always had good, friendly relations with Afghanistan under all regimes and governments. These relations remain such today. As in the past, there are the two points of principle underlying our relations with Afghanistan. First, it is a neighbouring country with which we have a 2,500 km-long common border. Naturally, one should always have good relations with neighbours. Second, that people has made its choice and embarked on a road of change. That is its right.

We are neither going to have any bases nor are we looking for raw materials in Afghanistan. Developments are not simple there and both you and we know their causes.

We responded to Afghanistan's call for help some time ago and temporarily sent troops into the country at the request of its government. Of course, we are not going to stay there forever. The Afghan people and their government would hardly agree to that anyway.

We stand for a political settlement of the situation around Afghanistan. The Afghan Government has the same attitude. What is being done under UN sponsorship—I mean the Cordovez mission—is a real process. It can be a success and lead to political settlement if, of course, Pakistan and the United States are for a political settlement. But so far we see that as soon as the process begins to show signs of progress towards settlement, they immediately take measures to thwart it. Nevertheless I think that the day is not far off when the question of the political settlement of the situation around Afghanistan will be resolved. This will simultaneously mean the solution of the question of the withdrawal of our troops from Afghanistan.

We stand for a non-aligned and independent Afghanistan. I want to say anew that we have no expansionist designs with regard to Afghanistan. This should be perfectly clear to the whole world.

QUESTION: The world as a whole is now showing much interest in the changes introduced by you in the Soviet Union. You have characterised them in some of your statements as amounting to a revolution. Could you speak about them in more detail?

And to follow up this rather general question, I also wanted to add: I learned yesterday that the USSR Supreme Soviet had passed a law on individual labour. How does your current economic policy differ from the economic policy of Lenin? And to what extent is Lenin's new economic policy an example to you?

ANSWER: Socialism has led our country to the level at which it is today. It is a modern country which has resolved many problems precisely on the basis of socialist change and which has a great potential for successful continued advance, for developing its economy, resolving social and nationality questions, having dependable defences and making a contribution to the development of today's international relations.

We are happy with our territory. We have enough, although none to spare. We have a very close-knit people with a very well-developed sense of patriotism and pride because what has been achieved in the country has been achieved by the people.

But we are still not happy. Why? First of all because we can achieve more. We now have a mighty economic potential and mighty science, perhaps the world's mightiest. I do not want to boast but it is not so much my views as the views voiced in the world. We have a good cadre potential. Most of our young workers have secondary or higher education. We think that

using the potentialities of the planned economy, which makes it possible to make manoeuvres needed to advance scientific and technological progress, to draw up correct balances, to set priorities, and to develop the social sphere, we can take another major step. I think that we were a little relaxed some time ago. There emerged signs of complacency and inertia. They were a product, as it were, of our achievements, the positive characteristics and assets of our society, such as the right to work, health care, education, social security, and so on. So there appeared elements of complacency.

We have passed judgement on all this at our Congress.

And we did the right thing. Society itself was not satisfied with the way our economy, political institutions and socialist democracy were functioning and with the atmosphere in work collectives. Having initiated change, the Party received immense support for its policy from the people because it expressed the mood of the people. It is a policy of acceleration, of restructuring every area of the life of society within socialism, on the socialist basis. In short, the task is to change society for the better, to improve it on the basis of what we have achieved during 70 years.

Our main intention is to set our society into motion and ensure its advance to new frontiers through scientific and technological progress wedded with the planned economy and through the democratisation of society.

We have drawn up and are already fulfilling serious programmes for scientific and technological progress. They are embracing all the areas. We are giving priority to engineering and computer technology, and are revising our structural policy. But what will be decisive to the fate of our plans and policy will be the way we involve man, the working people in this process. We want to achieve this in the economy through cost-accounting, through the self-management of production collectives, through the broader practice of electing executive personnel and through a new economic mechanism. A new law on the enterprise is about to be finalised and we will submit it for a countrywide debate. The way the economy should function in today's conditions will be in that law. The main thing is the democratisation of production and greater independence and responsibility of work collectives.

This approach is welcomed by the Soviet people. This process already is under way.

Furthermore, we want the political system, including the bodies of government, public organisations, trade unions, the Komsomol, women's organisations and others, to function more efficiently.

We are thinking of setting the human factor into motion also by drastically revising our social policy in the interests of the working people. I would say that the strengthening of social policy today is the key to the solution of many questions in society.

I must say that change is going on not without difficulties. The main obstacle is mentality. The mentality which has taken shape over the years should be changed. And we are creating economic, social, political and ideological preconditions which give us the hope that this process will eventually prevail. We will achieve change in every field of society.

We attach considerable importance to questions of improving our spiritual and cultural sphere and the moral atmosphere in society. There is a very strong desire in our people for justice and for the consistent observance of the principles of socialism and the assertion of the values gained. That is why we are waging an uncompromising struggle against various negative phenomena, abuses of official position, crime, immoral behaviour, violations of discipline and order, and drunkenness. Society as a whole is actively taking part in it. The new is

waging battle against the old, sometimes in pointed forms, under the leadership of the Party. Work within the Party itself is being improved. The Party itself is changing. And we say: all change should begin with the Party. We are now making more stringent demands on the communists. There were those who were happy with the situation, with their positions. We have now reminded all of them of their duty to the people. This is immensely important.

This change will take time and effort. But I can say with confidence that we are on the right road and have the support of the people. This support keeps growing.

We welcome everything that serves socialism and are creating preconditions for using every possibility intrinsic to our system. We will use more efficiently the instruments of planning, material incentive, social factors and possibilities offered by improvements in commodity-monetary relations. It was in that context that we passed the law on individual labour—all within the framework of socialism.

We will keep following that road. We have no doubts. I think all this will have immense consequences for our country and, in view of her role in the world, for the world as a whole.

Naturally, putting forward and fulfilling these plans, we also have an interest in peace and in co-operation with other countries, socialist, developing and capitalist alike. We are open to all this.

QUESTION: I would like to put a question about a very important region, the Middle East. Do you have any new peace initiatives for that region?

ANSWER: I think that the Middle East is a common problem for the whole world. I want to stress, a common problem. And in my view there has been no progress there for the simple reason that some states were going to settle the problem to their liking. Now we see that this policy of circumvention and separate deals has brought nothing good.

I think that the international community is now realising that the solution of the problem of this very important and explosive region should be given an international dimension. I would reaffirm our constructive proposal that preparations should begin through the Security Council and the preparatory committee for convening an international conference on the Middle East.

Such a preparatory phase on the basis of bilateral contacts and multilateral exchanges of views could make it possible to produce serious proposals which would meet the interests of all states.

I think that there is today a broader understanding of the realism and efficiency of this path.

I am happy with our meeting and with the opportunity to share my ideas in answering your questions for the Indian public. I think that it was a good thing to do on the eve of my visit to India. See you in New Delhi.

Thank you. □

Book by Mikhail Gorbachev

A CEREMONY to mark the publication in India of the book 'Peace has no Alternative' by Mikhail Gorbachev was held in the Presidential Palace in New Delhi on Sunday. The book is a collection of recent speeches, articles and interviews by the Soviet leader, and is put out by Patriot Publishers. □

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Message to Parliaments and Peoples of the world

Here follows the full text of the November 19 message from the Supreme Soviet of the USSR to the Parliaments and Peoples of the world:

MINDFUL of the fact that the community of the historical destinies of all countries and peoples in the face of the threat of a nuclear holocaust imperatively dictates the need for joint actions in the name of averting it, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR deemed it necessary to address all Parliaments and Peoples of the world.

The Soviet-American summit meeting in Reykjavik signified a qualitatively new stage in the effort to bring about a world without nuclear weapons. We know now: it is possible to get rid of nuclear weapons as early as within the lifetime of the present generation.

It is precisely with this aim that our country advanced its daring yet quite feasible programme.

The Soviet Union proposes reducing by 50 per cent the strategic offensive arms of the USSR and the US over a period of five years. In the five years after that, that is by the end of 1996, all the remaining arms of the sides in that category would be subject to elimination.

We propose eliminating completely medium-range nuclear missiles of the USSR and the US in Europe and reducing radically the number of missiles of that class in Asia.

We propose that the USSR and the US pledge not to use their right to withdraw from the 1972 Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems—a treaty of unlimited duration—over a period of 10 years and to observe strictly all of its provisions. We are opposed to SDI and stand for the strengthening of the ABM Treaty.

We propose, finally, that the USSR and the US immediately enter negotiations on a complete termination of nuclear tests.

The idea is that all the drastic nuclear disarmament measures proposed by the Soviet Union should be carried out under the strictest possible control, including international control with on-site inspection.

The radical measures listed above make up an integral package. The package is a balance of interests and concessions, a balance of the removal of mutual concerns, an interdependence of security interests.

Reykjavik not only gave rise to hopes. It also brought to light the difficulties on the road to a nuclear-free world. The conclusion reached by a considerable part of the world public that the American 'Star Wars' plans, the so-called SDI programme, became the main obstacle hindering agreements on the elimination of nuclear weapons is a correct conclusion. This was confirmed in full at the Reykjavik meeting. The SDI programme is an attempt to achieve the status of military superiority, to find a method of waging a nuclear war with the hope of victory in it.

Historical experience shows that the USSR has always found an adequate response to any threat to its security. This will be so in the future as well. The Soviet Union has sufficient intellectual, scientific, technical and industrial potential for this.

But the Supreme Soviet of the USSR realises that the development of space weapons, with the arms race spilling over into an exceptionally costly and especially dangerous sphere, will deprive politicians of the possibility of controlling

the march of events. A technical fault or mistake, a computer malfunction can trigger off an irreparable catastrophe.

The Soviet Union suggests a real alternative to the space arms race. It is peaceful space exploration through co-operation among all countries for common benefit and prosperity.

At this exceptionally important and perhaps decisive moment in human history, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR calls on all parliaments and peoples to come out strongly for a practical start to creating a nuclear-free world and building reliable security, to be shared by all countries on an equal basis.

This task must take priority over any state-to-state disputes and ideological disagreements.

Nobody must be allowed to slam shut the door to a nuclear-free future, which had begun to be opened at Reykjavik.

The Supreme Soviet of the USSR solemnly confirms that the USSR does not withdraw any of the proposals it made in Reykjavik, aimed at eliminating all nuclear systems. The Soviet delegation to the talks in Geneva has been instructed to abide by these proposals in their totality.

The Supreme Soviet of the USSR confirms that the unilateral moratorium on all nuclear blasts, declared by the Soviet Union more than 15 months ago, remains in effect. There is still time until January 1, 1987 for the United States to listen at long last to the voice of reason and the demands of hundreds of millions of people the world over, and stop nuclear explosions. In this event, the USSR, too, would not resume nuclear testing. Thereby a long stride would be taken along the path to nuclear disarmament.

We continue to stand for a ban on chemical weapons and the destruction of all their stocks. We stand for strict compliance with the convention banning biological weapons. We stand for substantial cuts in conventional arms in Europe on the principles of equal security for the sides. The concrete, far-reaching proposals of the Soviet Union and the other Warsaw Treaty countries on all these issues still stand and we are waiting for a reply from the NATO countries.

The Supreme Soviet of the USSR is convinced that there is room for every state in the common effort to deliver mankind from the nuclear burden. When the task is to save mankind, there are no big and little countries and peoples. It concerns all and should be a cause of all.

This is why the moment has come for everyone to determine his stand in the face of the threat of outer space being made into an arena for military rivalry. No government and no parliament may avoid responsibility as the matter at issue is the life of all countries, including their own countries and peoples. There cannot and must not be anyone neutral in this respect.

Our message to you is also an address by all Soviet people. Time is pressing. It is urging action. □

Political Bureau meeting

AT its meeting on November 20, the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee considered the results of the CPSU delegation's talks with the delegation of the Social Democratic Party of Finland and of Yegor Ligachev's meeting with President Mauno Koivisto of Finland.

It was emphasised that the Soviet Union attached paramount importance to all-round strengthening of relations of friendship and co-operation with neighbouring Finland. Confidence was expressed that the years-long experience and mutual trust of the Soviet and Finnish peoples and the identity of their lasting interests made it possible to elevate relations between the two countries to a still higher stage, and confirmed once again the promising nature of the policy of peaceful coexistence and detente.

It was pointed out with satisfaction that the Soviet Union's new steps aimed at strengthening security in the north European region, the steps that had been spoken of in Helsinki, and the initiatives connected with making the region a nuclear-free zone were meeting with a positive international response.

The meeting heard a report from Geidar Aliyev on the CPSU delegation's participation in the work of the Fourth Congress of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP), and the delegation's conversations with Comrade Kayson Phomvihane and other Laotian leaders.

Determination was reaffirmed to continue to

strengthen friendship and all-round co-operation between the CPSU and LPRP, and between the Soviet Union and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, on the basis of the principles of Marxism-Leninism and socialist internationalism and to do everything necessary to deepen fraternal friendship between the peoples of the two countries.

The Political Bureau discussed the results of the meeting held at the CPSU Central Committee on matters pertaining to the introduction of the state-managed acceptance of products made by amalgamations and enterprises of industrial ministries.

It was pointed out that securing a rise in the quality of output was an integral part of the acceleration strategy and of the Party's course towards radical reconstruction of the national economy and towards raising the wellbeing of the Soviet people.

The Political Bureau also pointed out that preparatory work to introduce the state-managed acceptance of products from January 1987 must be closely coordinated with the switching of enterprises and amalgamations over to the principles of complete self-accounting, self-financing and self-repayment, and with the raising of their independence and responsibility.

Some other matters related to the development of the Soviet economy, to personnel policy, and to the realisation of the USSR's foreign policy course were also discussed at the meeting. □

UN associations meet

REPRESENTATIVES of the Soviet and British United Nations associations have been discussing Washington's 'Strategic Defense Initiative'. They held a bilateral discussion on Monday in Moscow on pressing international problems. The British delegation at the meeting was led by the association's president, David Ennals.

He expressed regret that the SDI had stood in the way of reaching understandings at the Soviet-American summit in Reykjavik. □

Session of USSR Supreme Soviet ends

THE session of the USSR Supreme Soviet completed its deliberations in the Kremlin last Wednesday. The Law on the State Plan for the Social and Economic Development of the USSR for 1987 and the Law on the State Budget of the USSR for 1987 were endorsed.

The State Plan envisages that the USSR's national income will show a 4.1 per cent increase next year. It provides for a 4.4 per cent increase in industrial output and a 4.6 per cent increase in capital investments in the economy. A growth in labour productivity in industry, construction and in railway transport is also envisaged.

It is planned to increase the real per capita income by 2.6 per cent. The public consumption funds, from which free education, medical attendance, etc. are financed, will grow 4.9 per cent.

Pay to workers in public education, in the health services and in social security will be increased. The plan envisages bonuses for factory and office workers for continuous careers of work in the southern areas of the Far East and in some other regions of the USSR.

Next year paid leave for attending a sick child will be extended to 14 days. An increase is planned in the pensions paid to collective farmers and members of their families, which were fixed more than ten years ago at a level of up to 50 roubles a month. Grants to persons disabled from childhood will go up, and medicines will be provided free to crippled children up to the age of

16 years.

On top of this, the plan provides for an increase in the grants to post-graduates at higher educational establishments and research institutes.

In the housing field, the Plan provides for the construction of more than two million new apartments.

The State Budget of the USSR provides for revenues of 435,600 million roubles and expenditures of 435,500 million roubles. Defence spending will be kept at the current level of 4.6 per cent.

The session discussed the activities of the USSR People's Control Committee (the people's control system in the Soviet Union comprises state and public control).

Alexei Shkolnikov, Chairman of the USSR People's Control Committee, said in a speech that 10 million people were taking part in the work of people's control groups and posts, acting on a voluntary, unpaid basis at virtually all enterprises in the Soviet Union.

The deputies analysed the Committee's work and pointed out shortcomings and omissions. A resolution passed by the Soviet Parliament outlined ways for improving the activities of the people's control system.

They also discussed and endorsed the draft law on individual labour, submitted to the Supreme Soviet by Ivan Gladkikh, Chairman of the USSR State Committee for Labour and Social Issues.

Ivan Gladkikh told them that the new law proceeded from the fact that individual labour

was expedient and had to be fitted in fully with the principles of the socialist economy. "The law drafters have drawn on the experience of other socialist countries and taken account of the wishes voiced by people through the press," he said, "as well as of the results of an extensive discussion of this document in the country's work collectives."

He explained that the draft was based on the following principles:

—the state regulates individual labour and ensures its use in the interests of society;

—all unwarranted restrictions on such personal activities which are useful are lifted;

—the incomes from individual labour activity should correspond to the inputs of personal work and the principle of social justice;

—the right to issue permits for and regulate individual labour is granted to the local Soviets of People's Deputies.

Ivan Gladkikh told the deputies that the list of almost 30 individual labour services and activities allowed by the draft law was not exhaustive and provided for the possibility of its being supplemented at local level. "At the same time," he added, "a number of activities are prohibited. This includes making and repairing weapons, producing toxic and narcotic substances, running gambling houses and organising games of chance."

The list of those who could engage in individual labour included citizens who had come of age—they could do so in their spare time—and also housewives, the disabled, pensioners, students and those undergoing training.

Only jointly living members of a family could engage in individual labour. Hired labour was not permitted.

Going into the need for the new legislation, the speaker said state and co-operative organisations had not been meeting consumer demand for goods and services fully. "This is explained both by the inadequate material base of the social sphere and by the lack of proper flexibility in its work," Ivan Gladkikh noted. "This is why it has been inevitably supplemented by individual labour. So far, however, there has not been a law that would regulate all its forms on a country-wide scale, and this has posed a certain psychological barrier to those willing to make extra earnings by honest work."

"Considering the complexity of the preparations for implementing the new law, it is proposed that it goes into force in May 1987."

"The draft law's provisions accord completely with the principles of the socialist economy. It is obvious that this new law does not mean a return to any form of private enterprise, which some people in the West had hoped for," Ivan Gladkikh said in conclusion.

In the light of the situation that has taken shape since the Soviet-American summit meeting in Iceland, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR addressed the Parliaments and Peoples of the World, calling on them to prevent the door to a nuclear-free future, which had begun to be opened at Reykjavik, from being slammed shut. The Address urged the parliaments and peoples to "come out strongly for a practical start to creating a nuclear-free world and building reliable security, to be shared by all countries on an equal basis." (*full text elsewhere in this issue*)

Deputy Anatoli Dobrynin, Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, addressed the session on behalf of the Foreign Affairs Commissions of both chambers of the Soviet Parliament. He said that the situation in the world had changed in many respects since the Soviet-American Reykjavik meeting. "The fight for a non-nuclear future has entered a qualitatively new stage," he noted. □

Supreme Soviet session in focus

THE year 1987 will be the first year when the whole of Soviet industry will go over to work under the new economic conditions. So far, only certain industries have operated under these conditions on an experimental basis.

A statement to this effect was made at the press centre of the USSR Foreign Ministry last Friday by Nikolai Talyzin, Chairman of the USSR State Planning Committee (Gosplan). Together with Boris Gostev, USSR Finance Minister, and Ivan Gladkikh, Chairman of the USSR State Committee for Labour and Social Issues, he was addressing a press conference for Soviet and foreign newsmen. The press conference was devoted to the results of the session of the USSR Supreme Soviet in the Kremlin last week.

"The economy of the USSR will develop next year solely through intensive factors, and practically the whole increase in output will be ensured through an increase in labour productivity," Nikolai Talyzin stressed. "The economy will operate far more effectively than in the past. Next year alone, production costs will drop by the same figure as they have done over the past five years."

Boris Gostev noted that never before had the USSR invested such big funds in the development of its economy as in 1987—more than 450,000 million roubles. He added that profits from socialist enterprises would also for the first time grow by nine per cent. This meant that the enterprises would operate noticeably more effectively.

Answering a question from Western newsmen on the financial damage dealt to the country by the cut in the sale of alcoholic drinks, Boris Gostev replied that there had certainly been a drop in returns. "Yet," he stressed, "it should be borne in mind that the main source of income in the USSR is socialist production." □

Answering numerous questions from correspondents in connection with the law on individual labour adopted at the session of the Supreme Soviet, Ivan Gladkikh pointed out that this law encouraged all labour, provided it accorded with the interests of society, helped meet even more fully people's demands for consumer goods and services, and enabled people to make additional earnings.

"It is important to realise that individual labour is by no means tantamount to private enterprise," he said. "The provisions of the law prohibit the use of hired labour. Herein lies the fundamental difference of the current law from the New Economic Policy (NEP) of the 1920s, when private enterprise was permitted."

Answering a question about the possible share of individual labour in the country's national income, Ivan Gladkikh said that it was not expected to be more than 0.5 per cent.

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In an interview on Monday Ivan Gladkikh explained that the new Law had been drawn up in keeping with both the Constitution and the principles of the socialist economy—where public production was the basic means of meeting the Soviet people's growing needs. Article 17 of the Constitution allowed for individual labour in crafts, agriculture and services.

He also spoke about the large-scale measures to develop consumer goods and services in the Soviet Union. A comprehensive programme for this for the period 1986-2000 is now being implemented.

The alleviation of shortages through the public sector would have an effect on the prices of goods and services offered by people engaged in individual pursuits. A well-thought-out tax policy had to play an important role in this respect, and there was much work to be done here, Ivan Gladkikh said. □

Nikolai Ryzhkov's speech at reception for Dutch Premier

Nikolai Ryzhkov, member of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee and Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, last Thursday gave the following speech at a dinner in honour of Rudolph Lubbers, Prime Minister of the Netherlands, and his wife. The dinner was given by the Soviet Government in the Grand Kremlin Palace:

Esteemed Mr Prime Minister and Mrs Lubbers,
Esteemed Guests,
Comrades,

On behalf of the Soviet Government, I sincerely welcome the high representatives of the Netherlands, a country whose people made a noticeable contribution to the development of European and world civilisation, the land of Rembrandt, Spinoza and Desiderius Erasmus, whose heritage is a bright portion of the intellectual and cultural wealth of the whole of mankind.

It is the first visit by a Dutch head of government to our country. In one way or another, it is turning over a new page in the history of Soviet-Dutch relations. Talking about history, trade between our peoples has played a special role in the growth of peaceful relations between them. The prestige of Dutch merchants on the Russian market was so great that Russia granted them the privileges now usually called "most favoured nation treatment" as far back as the late 17th century. A Dutch brig was the first foreign ship to enter the harbour of St Petersburg when the city was still under construction. It was from the Dutch that Russian shipbuilders and builders of shipping and irrigation canals learnt in the times of Peter the Great.

Our countries have never been at war with each other but usually joined forces in days of grim trials. That was what took place in the years of the Second World War, too, when hundreds of Soviet people fought side by side with the Dutch in the resistance movement in the Netherlands, for the right of our peoples to freedom, independence and a life of peace.

The Soviet Union and the Netherlands belong to different social systems and military and political alliances. This, however, should be no obstacle to serious and business-like co-operation and a joint search for ways to improve the international situation. We have commendable achievements in bi-lateral co-operation, specifically in the agri-industry. We hope that the Soviet-Dutch talks which have begun and the agreements which we will sign tomorrow will offer opportunities for broadening and invigorating this co-operation.

Naturally, relations between our countries are not confined to trade and economic matters, important as they are. At a time of dangerous world tensions, co-operation in international affairs should remain central to our dialogue.

There is a need today for a new approach to many problems of our world. This is natural because the fates of the states of Europe and the world as a whole are intertwined so closely in the nuclear-missile age that group, bloc and ideological interests should recede before the awareness that peace is the highest value.

The meeting in Reykjavik, where the Soviet Union proposed a package of carefully balanced and interlinked proposals on nuclear disarmament, demonstrated that we had never been closer to beginning to abolish nuclear weapons. Whatever one's attitude to Reykjavik may be—and there are those who are already trying to misrepresent and emaciate the meaning

of the accord reached there—it is beyond doubt that the Iceland meeting led the talks on nuclear disarmament to new frontiers. Those frontiers must be defended today so that there should be no return to endless and fruitless discussions over the problems of disarmament against the background of the escalating arms race. The Soviet Union will not agree to deception of the peoples. Our stand is that progress should be made perseveringly and talks continued on the entire range of problems of nuclear and space weapons, from the positions made clear in Reykjavik. Every country should most responsibly make its choice in that major undertaking. While the USA, chasing military superiority, has cast its lot in with the SDI programme, Europe cannot help pondering the irreversible consequences of such a step.

The complex of our proposals, including those on the elimination of Soviet and American medium-range missiles in Europe, is offering the prospect of ridding the continent of nuclear weapons and clearing the way to detente. Dutch official spokesmen, as far as we remember, vigorously advocated such a prospect some time ago. All Europeans stand to gain from efforts to achieve relevant agreements and have them implemented as soon as possible.

The arguments that Western Europe will feel "defenceless" without American nuclear weapons in the face of the armed forces and conventional armaments of the Warsaw Treaty countries do not sound convincing today either. Our proposals in that field are well known. Our allies and we have called for substantial and balanced reductions in the armed forces and conventional armaments in Europe and we are still waiting for a NATO reply to our initiative.

Generally speaking, European affairs would make far brisker progress if the peace initiatives of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries were examined in the West without bias and not misrepresented there as diplomatic traps and ploys. As Mikhail Gorbachev has pointed out on more than one occasion, the Soviet Union does not at all believe that its security can rest on prejudice to the security interests of other countries, and in our practical policy we proceed consistently from this premise. Let us seek accords on the basis of common sense, political realism and the principles of peaceful coexistence with due regard for the worries and interests of every nation.

The Stockholm Conference, the success of which made a favourable impact on the Vienna meeting which opened recently, showed that Europe could advance in that direction. If the momentum of the European process is maintained in Vienna, greater security and a higher level of co-operation in every field will be achieved.

Clearly, detente cannot be confined to co-operation in any one field, even a very important one. The European process should be advanced in every area, all the more so since the condition of co-operation in any area we take is far below the real potentialities and needs of European countries. This holds true, inter alia, for the economy, environmental protection, science, technology and the safe development of atomic power engineering. We stand for more energetic co-operation in these fields and for a joint search for new ways and forms of such co-operation.

Problems of humanitarian co-operation are

calling for attention and for a new and comprehensive approach as well. That is why the Soviet Union has put forward at the Vienna meeting the proposal to convene in Moscow a representative conference of the CSCE states to discuss a broad range of relevant issues, including human contacts and information, cultural and educational exchanges. We believe that if such a conference is held in a constructive spirit, a new chapter of humanitarian co-operation in Europe could be opened.

Esteemed Mr Prime Minister,

In conclusion I would like to express satisfaction with today's exchanges of views with you and Foreign Minister Mr van den Broek. Of course, there are substantial differences between our views. Yet we could note at the same time that our approaches to some important issues were quite compatible, offering a basis for co-operation between the Soviet Union and the Netherlands in strengthening security and broadening co-operation in Europe, and in strengthening world peace. With such a prospect before us, we will always be ready to continue business contacts with the government of your country.

Permit me to wish the best of health and every success to you and all our Dutch guests, and peace and prosperity to the people of the Netherlands, for whom we have sincere respect.

At the dinner Rudolph Lubbers was accompanied by Hans van den Broek, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, and other Dutch officials.

The Soviet side was represented by Nikolai Ryzhkov and his wife, Eduard Shevardnadze, Nikolai Talyzin, Vsevolod Murakhovsky, deputy chairmen of the USSR Council of Ministers, ministers, chairmen of USSR state committees and other officials. □

(Continued from front page)

problems of Asia, the Indian and Pacific ocean regions will be in the focus of attention—in the context of the struggle to prevent nuclear war and improve the entire international situation.

We have already played host to Mr Rajiv Gandhi in our country, the Soviet Union. This visit of mine is a reply one. I value very much the dialogue which takes place between us fairly regularly, although we see each other not so often.

Our dialogue enables us to keep each other informed all the time of the most important questions of our international activities and bilateral relations.

I have no doubt that continuation of the dialogue here in Delhi will lend a still greater dynamism to our versatile Soviet-Indian relations and will raise still higher the role of co-operation between our two great states as a factor in world politics, a factor of peace and universal security.

I wholeheartedly thank you once again on behalf of all persons who have arrived together with me.

Thank you for the ceremonial welcome and for the garlands of flowers, in which we see much more than just a tribute to an ancient tradition. □

When the pinch comes on President Reagan's statement

By Academician Georgi Arbatov

A FEW days ago President Reagan delivered an anti-Soviet speech at the Ethics and Public Policy Centre, beating all his previous records for hostility towards this country. It was a war cry urging a "crusade" and a call to arms.

It was literally an incendiary speech, for the President kept talking about the need to set something alight in order to scatter the darkness coming from the "evil spirit", that is, the Soviet Union—a candle or better a torch or maybe a world war.

The message of the speech becomes clear from its very first paragraph. There the President recalls the counter-revolutionary mutiny in Hungary in 1956 and comes to the conclusion that the United States did not behave correctly then. It should not have been twiddling its thumbs, the President says. Those who know anything about the political history of the United States cannot fail to realise the sinister implication of those historical reminiscences. The events in Hungary caused heated debate in the United States: some said that it was an irresponsible policy to have incited counter-revolution to rebellion for months, by making it believe that the United States would eventually resort to open military intervention. Others cursed President Dwight Eisenhower for his decision not to resort to such intervention and not to unleash a war.

To make absolutely clear what he was driving at, President Reagan vowed to continue armed intervention in Afghanistan, Angola and Nicaragua, and even promised to interfere in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union. He cited bleeding El Salvador and raped Grenada as examples, models of American policy.

That speech, to all intents and purposes, rejects the idea of peaceful coexistence. It urges the return of US policy not even to 1956 but to 1918 when American troops participated in the inglorious failed intervention in Soviet Russia. Fortunately for us and for the United States too, this all took place in pre-nuclear times.

It's not much fun reading all that. Yet the curious thing about it is that as you read the speech you realise that for all their efforts to scare us, we are not afraid. It is not because we are used to being scared by Reagan and others. And it is not only because we are now more confident in ourselves, in our strength and in our future than ever before and shall never be swayed by threats or abuse.

There is a different reason. It is quite clear that the President needs biblical anger mainly to cheer himself and his followers up, and at the same time distract public attention from the serious trouble in which the administration has found itself.

In foreign policy, this is above all Reykjavik. It has indeed become the moment of truth because it has turned out to be totally inconvenient for the administration as it revealed the yawning gap between its fine words and unseemly deeds. For five weeks there has been a vain effort to bridge the gap, by confusing everybody else as well as themselves, twisting, turning and lying. But now they seem to have found that nothing will come out of it and that everything has just to be crossed out altogether, declaring the accords achieved to be non-existent. Besides, to judge by President Reagan's speech, he did it in as rude a form as he could.

One does not have to have special insight to see

the reasons behind such truculent behaviour. They want to provoke us into thwarting the dialogue with our own hands and burying the talks that have become too much of a nuisance for them.

But the Soviet Union has learnt something in recent years. Undoubtedly the US Administration will never succeed in provoking Gorbachev or the rest of the Soviet leadership. In fact, it has never succeeded in provoking not only politicians but even the people who write about it, this writer among others. Although, to be frank, I was itching to speak some more of my mind.

However, Reykjavik is not all there is to it. The administration has had other troubles too.

It has scandalised itself by a lying campaign against Libya. Then CIA agent Hasenfus fell into captivity in Nicaragua and "let the cat out of the bag". Next came a still more unpleasant affair with Iran—a story worth screening, indeed one fit to be featured as a second-rate Hollywood film, such as those that used to star Ronald Reagan. This is a story of secret arms supplies, nicknamed ships, false passports and disguise, conflicting evidence by ever-lying officials and, by all accounts, many other adventures we may yet hear about.

Then came the electoral defeat that gave the Democratic opposition a majority in both houses. This must be worrying the President very much—for even without this problem the remaining two years in office do not promise to be simple for him. It is not for nothing that they are called the "lame duck period"—when authority and prestige fade out, supporters desert you and opponents get bolder. That must have been the reason behind a rather clear hint in the President's speech, which was more like a threat against the Democrats. They were told, in fact, that a failure to agree with the President means backing Moscow, the communists, and that is high treason. This is the old McCarthyist ploy, one that has been used under the Reagan Administration more than once, as in the latest elections, when the voters were blackmailed by the warning that those who voted against the Republicans would be found to have voted for Gorbachev. But that did not work. Some did vote against Reagan (but not of course for Gorbachev: it was after all a domestic matter). What will happen next is yet to be seen.

The administration faces other predicaments, less spectacular but more serious. Largely due to exorbitant war expenditures, the economic situation is deteriorating. America is turning into the world's largest foreign debtor, with the biggest deficit in the balance of trade. Science and technology are also having a difficult time, even if the President did not spare fine words in describing breakthroughs in his country. In reality the US is becoming an ever weaker competitor in several fields, science-intensive industries included, for example the computer and aerospace industries, instrument making or communications equipment. In 1980, US exports of sophisticated machinery exceeded imports by 27 milliard, the figure dropping to four milliard by 1985. By the end of this year, US imports in that sphere are expected to exceed exports by two milliard. Expert opinion blames the war orientation of the country's scientific and technological potential, which has shown itself an ever lesser economic stimulant.

In short, the Reagan Administration is in deep water. The astonishing luck of the past few years is gone.

As I see it, that's the main reason for the November 18 speech. The U-turn in the oratorical manner and political phraseology was a forced

one: the administration is facing difficulties for which it has largely itself to blame.

But it does not want to recognise this openly, and so uses the Soviet Union as a scapegoat. The attempts to switch the mounting public indignation against it are meant to make the community forget its very genuine problems for a world of animated cartoons, in which the good empire contends with and beats the evil empire.

Whether he is aware of it or not, the President is not performing a striking good-guy part in the political cartoon. What he said on November 18 gives one ample ground to think he is going back to his role of backwoods ideologist educated by crude anti-communist lies and faked quotations, like Nikolai Lenin's ten commandments, which he repeatedly quotes and which first appeared in a pamphlet cooked by Dr Goebbels' men during the Second World War.

It's hard to guess whether that primitive political trick will work and mock problems will again replace genuine ones in American minds. Many things are possible in America—but the nation can't be deceived forever.

But these are US home affairs. I don't mean to follow a bad example by interfering in them.

Reagan's speech interests us in so much as it concerns us. The turn from negotiations to rabid anti-Sovietism also places certain questions before the Soviet Union. Primarily the question of yet another deficit in the USA—the deficit of its elementary reliability as a partner. I believe, here, in Moscow, we should now give serious thought to how we are to treat the word of the US President. In Reykjavik he almost countersigned an agreement on the total elimination of nuclear arms. But just slightly a month later not only did he abandon everything, but he proclaimed a crusade against the USSR, making an agreement contingent on changes in the internal practices of our country.

Where then is the true, the real President Reagan? With whom are we dealing in actuality? And is there this reality, this actuality at all? Or is it all but a kaleidoscope of different fields that alter with fleeting changes in the mood and the political weather? And is the President now able to function at all? Or does somebody else speak through his mouth, now one, now another, depending on what the circumstances are?

Many in Moscow are asking themselves these and other questions now—both ordinary people and, I believe, the policy-makers. Doubts keep mounting. I am speaking about this without a shade of jubilation, and even less so of gloat. Rather with bitterness. Because we treat very seriously relations with the USA, we respected and are respecting the Americans, the people of that intricate, puzzling, but great country.

And although it is not the hub of the world, I would not want to see our two countries, faced with so many hard and dangerous problems, lose two more years—till the next presidential elections. Or let them become years of a further aggravation of tension.

In conclusion, since the President in this speech also did not do without references to faith and religious values, two quotations from the holy writ. Specially for him. With references.

The first: "... wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction . . . strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life" (St. Matthew, 7: 13, 14).

And the second: "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos, 3: 3). □

(Pravda, November 21. In full.)