The Road We Traveled
The Challenges We Face

Mikhail Gorbachev

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Speeches
Articles
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The Nobel Lecture

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and gentlemen,

This moment is no less emotional for me than the one when I first learned about the decision of the Nobel Committee. For on similar occasions great men addressed humankind – men famous for their courage in working to bring together morality and politics. Among them were my compatriots.

The award of the Nobel Peace Prize makes one think once again about a seemingly simple and clear question: What is peace?

Preparing for my address I found in an old Russian encyclopedia a definition of "peace" as a "commune" – the traditional cell of Russian peasant life. I saw in that definition the people's profound understanding of peace as harmony, concord, mutual help, and cooperation.

This understanding is embodied in the canons of world religions and in the works of philosophers from antiquity to our time. The names of many of them have been mentioned here before. Let me add another one to them. Peace "propagates wealth and justice, which constitute the prosperity of nations;" a peace which is "just a respite from wars ... is not worthy of the name;" peace implies "general counsel". This was written almost 200 years ago by Vasiliy Fyodorovich Malinovskiy – the dean of the Tsarskoye Selo Lyceum at which the great Pushkin was educated.

Since then, of course, history has added a great deal to the specific content of the concept of peace. In this nuclear

age it also means a condition for the survival of the human race. But the essence, as understood both by the popular wisdom and by intellectual leaders, is the same.

Today, peace means the ascent from simple coexistence to cooperation and common creativity among countries and nations.

Peace is movement towards globality and universality of civilization. Never before has the idea that peace is indivisible been so true as it is now.

Peace is not unity in similarity but unity in diversity, in the comparison and conciliation of differences.

And, ideally, peace means the absence of violence. It is an ethical value. And here we have to recall Rajiv Gandhi, who died so tragically a few days ago.

I consider the decision of your Committee as a recognition of the great international importance of the changes now under way in the Soviet Union, and as an expression of confidence in our policy of new thinking, which is based on the conviction that at the end of the twentieth century force and arms will have to give way as a major instrument in world politics.

I see the decision to award me the Nobel Peace Prize also as an act of solidarity with the monumental undertaking which has already placed enormous demands on the Soviet people in terms of efforts, costs, hardships, willpower, and character. And solidarity is a universal value which is becoming indispensable for progress and for the survival of humankind.

But a modern state has to be worthy of solidarity, in other words, it should pursue, in both domestic and international affairs, policies that bring together the interests of its people and those of the world community. This task, however obvious, is not a simple one. Life is much richer and more complex than even the most perfect plans to make it better. It ultimately takes vengeance for attempts to impose abstract schemes, even with the best of intentions. *Perestroika* has made us understand this about our past, and the actual

experience of recent years has taught us to reckon with the most general laws of civilization.

This, however, came later. But back in March-April 1985 we found ourselves facing a crucial, and I confess, agonizing choice. When I agreed to assume the office of the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Central Committee, in effect the highest State office at that time, I realized that we could no longer live as before and that I would not want to remain in that office unless I got support in undertaking major reforms. It was clear to me that we had a long way to go. But of course, I could not imagine how immense were our problems and difficulties. I believe no one at that time could foresee or predict them.

Those who were then governing the country knew what was really happening to it and what we later called *"zastoi"*, roughly translated as "stagnation". They saw that our society was marking time, that it was running the risk of falling hopelessly behind the technologically advanced part of the world. Total domination of centrally-managed state property, the pervasive authoritarian-bureaucratic system, ideology's grip on politics, monopoly in social thought and sciences, militarized industries that siphoned off our best, including the best intellectual resources, the unbearable burden of military expenditures that suffocated civilian industries and undermined the social achievements of the period since the Revolution which were real and of which we used to be proud – such was the actual situation in the country.

As a result, one of the richest countries in the world, endowed with immense overall potential, was already sliding downwards. Our society was declining, both economically and intellectually. And yet, to a casual observer the country seemed to present a picture of relative well-being, stability and order. The misinformed society under the spell of propaganda was hardly aware of what was going on and what the immediate future had in store for it. The slightest manifestations of protest were suppressed. Most people considered them heretical, slanderous and counter-revolutionary.

Such was the situation in the spring of 1985, and there was a great temptation to leave things as they were, to make only cosmetic changes. This, however, meant continuing to deceive ourselves and the people.

This was the domestic aspect of the dilemma then before us. As for the foreign policy aspect, there was the East-West confrontation, a rigid division into friends and foes, the two hostile camps with a corresponding set of Cold War attributes. Both the East and the West were constrained by the logic of military confrontation, wearing themselves down more and more by the arms race.

The mere thought of dismantling the existing structures did not come easily. However, the realization that we faced inevitable disaster, both domestically and internationally, gave us the strength to make a historic choice, which I have never since regretted.

Perestroika, which once again is returning our people to commonsense, has enabled us to open up to the world, and has restored a normal relationship between the country's internal development and its foreign policy. But all this takes a lot of hard work. To a people which believed that its government's policies had always been true to the cause of peace, we proposed what was in many ways a different policy, which would genuinely serve the cause of peace, while differing from the prevailing view of what it meant and particularly from the established stereotypes as to how one should protect it. We proposed new thinking in foreign policy.

Thus, we embarked on a path of major changes which may turn out to be the most significant in the twentieth century, for our country and for its peoples. But we also did this for the entire world.

I began my book about Perestroika and the new thinking with the following words: "We want to be understood". After a while I felt that it was already happening. But now I would like once again to repeat those words here, from this world rostrum. Because to understand us really – to understand so as to believe us – proved to be not at all easy, owing to the

immensity of the changes under way in our country. Their magnitude and character are such as to require in-depth analysis. Applying conventional wisdom to Perestroika is unproductive. It is also futile and dangerous to set conditions, to say: We'll understand and believe you, as soon as you, the Soviet Union, come completely to resemble "us", the West.

No one is in a position to describe in detail what Perestroika will finally produce. But it would certainly be a self-delusion to expect that Perestroika will produce "a copy" of anything.

Of course, learning from the experience of others is something we have been doing and will continue to do. But this does not mean that we will come to be exactly like others. Our State will preserve its own identity within the international community. A country like ours, with its uniquely close-knit ethnic composition, cultural diversity and tragic past, the greatness of its historic endeavors and the exploits of its peoples – such a country will find its own path to the civilization of the twenty-first century and its own place in it. Perestroika has to be conceived solely in this context, otherwise it will fail and will be rejected. After all, it is impossible to "shed" the country's thousand-year history – a history, which we still have to subject to serious analysis in order to find the truth that we shall take into the future.

We want to be an integral part of modern civilization, to live in harmony with mankind's universal values, abide by the norms of international law, follow the "rules of the game" in our economic relations with the outside world. We want to share with all other peoples the burden of responsibility for the future of our common house.

A period of transition to a new quality in all spheres of society's life is accompanied by painful phenomena. When we were initiating Perestroika we failed to properly assess and foresee everything. Our society turned out to be hard to move off the ground, not ready for major changes which affect people's vital interests and make them leave behind everything to which they had become accustomed over many years. In

the beginning we imprudently generated great expectations, without taking into account the fact that it takes time for people to realize that all have to live and work differently, to stop expecting that new life would be given from above.

Perestroika has now entered its most dramatic phase. Following the transformation of the philosophy of Perestroika into real policy, which began literally to explode the old way of life, difficulties began to mount. Many took fright and wanted to return to the past. It was not only those who used to hold the levers of power in the administration, the army and various government agencies and who had to make room, but also many people whose interests and way of life was put to a severe test and who, during the preceding decades, had forgotten how to take the initiative and to be independent, enterprising and self-reliant.

Hence the discontent, the outbursts of protest and the exorbitant, though understandable, demands which, if satisfied right away, would lead to complete chaos. Hence, the rising political passions and, instead of a constructive opposition which is only normal in a democratic system, one that is often destructive and unreasonable, not to mention the extremist forces which are especially cruel and inhuman in areas of inter-ethnic conflict.

During the last six years we have discarded and destroyed much that stood in the way of a renewal and transformation of our society. But when society was given freedom it could not recognize itself, for it had lived too long, as it were, "beyond the looking glass". Contradictions and vices rose to the surface, and even blood has been shed, although we have been able to avoid a bloodbath. The logic of reform has clashed with the logic of rejection, and with the logic of impatience which breeds intolerance.

In this situation, which is one of great opportunity and of major risks, at a high point of Perestroika's crisis, our task is to stay the course while also addressing current everyday problems – which are literally tearing this policy apart – and to do it in such a way as to prevent a social and political explosion.

Now about my position. As to the fundamental choice, I have long ago made a final and irrevocable decision. Nothing and no one, no pressure, cither from the right or from the left, will make me abandon the positions of Perestroika and new thinking. I do not intend to change my views or convictions. My choice is a final one.

It is my profound conviction that the problems arising in the course of our transformations can be solved solely by constitutional means. That is why I make every effort to keep this process within the confines of democracy and reforms.

This applies also to the problem of self-determination of nations, which is a challenging one for us. We are looking for mechanisms to solve that problem within the framework of a constitutional process; we recognize the peoples' legitimate choice, with the understanding that if a people really decides, through a fair referendum, to withdraw from the Soviet Union, a certain agreed transition period will then be needed.

Steering a peaceful course is not easy in a country where generation after generation of people were led to believe that those who have power or force could throw those who dissent or disagree out of politics or even in jail. For centuries all the country's problems used to be finally resolved by violent means. All this has left an almost indelible mark on our entire "political culture", if the term is at all appropriate in this case.

Our democracy is being born in pain. A political culture is emerging – one that presupposes debate and pluralism, but also legal order and, if democracy is to work, strong government authority based on one law for all. This process is gaining strength. Being resolute in the pursuit of Perestroika, a subject of much debate these days, must be measured by the commitment to democratic change. Being resolute does not mean a return to repression, diktat or the suppression of rights and freedoms. I will never agree to having our society split once again into Reds and Whites, into those who claim to speak and act "on behalf of the people" and those who are "enemies of the people". Being resolute today means to act within the framework of po-

litical and social pluralism and the rule of law to provide conditions for continued reform and prevent a breakdown of the state and economic collapse, prevent the elements of chaos from becoming catastrophic.

All this requires taking certain tactical steps, to search for various ways of addressing both short- and long-term tasks. Such efforts and political and economic steps, agreements based on reasonable compromise, are there for everyone to see. I am convinced that the One-Plus-Nine Statement will go down in history as one such step, as a great opportunity. Not all parts of our decisions are readily accepted or correctly understood. For the most part, our decisions are unpopular; they arouse waves of criticism. But life has many more surprises in store for us, just as we will sometimes surprise it. Jumping to conclusions after every step taken by the Soviet leadership, after every decree by the President, trying to figure out whether he is moving left or right, backward or forward, would be an exercise in futility and would not lead to understanding.

We will seek answers to the questions we face only by moving forward, only by continuing and even radicalizing reforms, by consistently democratizing our society. But we will proceed prudently, carefully weighing each step we take.

There is already a consensus in our society that we have to move towards a mixed market economy. There are still differences as to how to do it and how fast we should move. Some are in favor of rushing through a transitional period as fast as possible, no matter what. Although this may smack of adventurism we should not overlook the fact that such views enjoy support. People are tired and are easily swayed by populism. So it would be just as dangerous to move too slowly, to keep people waiting in suspense. For them, life today is difficult, a life of considerable hardship.

Work on a new Union Treaty has entered its final stage. Its adoption will open a new chapter in the history of our multinational state.

After a time of rampant separatism and euphoria, when almost every village proclaimed sovereignty, a centripetal

force is beginning to gather momentum, based on a more sensible view of existing realities and the risks involved. And this is what counts most now. There is a growing will to achieve consensus, and a growing understanding that we have a State, a country, a common life. This is what must be preserved first of all. Only then can we afford to start figuring out which party or club to join and what God to worship.

The stormy and contradictory process of Perestroika, particularly in the past two years, has made us face squarely the problem of criteria to measure the effectiveness of State leadership. In the new environment of a multiparty system, freedom of thought, rediscovered ethnic identity and sovereignty of the republics, the interests of society must absolutely be put above those of various parties or groups, or any other sectoral, parochial or private interests, even though they also have the right to exist and to be represented in the political process and in public life, and, of course, they must be taken into account in the policies of the State.

Ladies and gentlemen, international politics is another area where a great deal depends on the correct interpretation of what is now happening in the Soviet Union. This is true today, and it will remain so in the future.

We are now approaching what might be the crucial point when the world community and, above all, the States with the greatest potential to influence world developments will have to decide on their stance with regard to the Soviet Union, and to act on that basis.

The more I reflect on the current world developments, the more I become convinced that the world needs Perestroika no less than the Soviet Union needs it. Fortunately, the present generation of policy-makers, for the most part, are becoming increasingly aware of this interrelationship, and also of the fact that now that Perestroika has entered its critical phase the Soviet Union is entitled to expect large-scale support to assure its success.

Recently, we have been seriously rethinking the substance and the role of our economic cooperation with other coun-

tries, above all major Western nations. We realize, of course, that we have to carry out measures that would enable us really to open up to the world economy and become its organic part. But at the same time we come to the conclusion that there is a need for a kind of synchronization of our actions towards that end with those of the Group of Seven and of the European Community. In other words, we are thinking of a fundamentally new phase in our international cooperation.

In these months much is being decided and will be decided in our country to create the prerequisites for overcoming the systemic crisis and gradually recovering to a normal life.

The multitude of specific tasks to be addressed in this context may be summarized within three main areas:

- Stabilizing the democratic process on the basis of a broad social consensus and a new constitutional structure of our Union as a genuine, free, and voluntary federation;
- Intensifying economic reform to establish a mixed market economy based on a new system of property relations;
- Taking vigorous steps to open the country up to the world economy through ruble convertibility and acceptance of civilized "rules of the game" adopted in the world market, and through membership in the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

These three areas are closely interrelated.

Therefore, there is a need for discussion in the Group of Seven and in the European Community. We need a joint program of action to be implemented over a number of years.

If we fail to reach an understanding regarding a new phase of cooperation, we will have to look for other ways, for time is of the essence. But if we are to move to that new phase, those who participate in and even shape world politics also must continue to change, to review their philosophic perception of the changing realities of the world and of its imperatives. Otherwise, there is no point in drawing up a joint program of practical action.

The Soviet leadership, both in the center and in the republics, as well as a large part of the Soviet public, understand this need, although in some parts of our society not everyone is receptive to such ideas. There are some flag-wavers who claim a monopoly of patriotism and think that it means "not getting entangled" with the outside world. Next to them are those who would like to reverse the course altogether. That kind of patriotism is nothing but a self-serving pursuit of one's own interests.

Clearly, as the Soviet Union proceeds with Perestroika, its contribution to building a new world will become more constructive and significant. What we have done on the basis of new thinking has made it possible to channel international cooperation along new, peaceful lines. Over these years we have come a long way in the general political cooperation with the West. It stood a difficult test at a time of momentous change in Eastern Europe and of the search for a solution to the German problem. It has withstood the crushing stress of the crisis in the Persian Gulf. There is no doubt that this cooperation, which all of us need, will become more effective and indispensable if our economies become more integrated and start working more or less in synchronized rhythm.

To me, it is self-evident that if Soviet Perestroika succeeds, there will be a real chance of building a new world order. And if Perestroika fails, the prospect of entering a new peaceful period in history will vanish, at least for the foreseeable future.

I believe that the movement that we have launched towards that goal has fairly good prospects of success. After all, mankind has already benefited greatly in recent years, and this has created a certain positive momentum.

The Cold War is over. The risk of a global nuclear war has practically disappeared. The Iron Curtain is gone. Germany has united, which is a momentous milestone in the history of Europe. There is not a single country on our continent which would not regard itself as fully sovereign and independent.

The USSR and the USA, the two nuclear superpowers, have moved from confrontation to interaction and, in some important cases, partnership. This has had a decisive effect on the entire international climate. This should be preserved and filled with new substance. The climate of Soviet-US trust should be protected, for it is a common asset of the world community. Any revision of the direction and potential of the Soviet-US relationship would have grave consequences for the entire global process.

The ideas of the Helsinki Final Act have begun to acquire real significance, they are being transformed into real policies and have found a more specific and topical expression in the Charter of Paris for a New Europe. Institutional forms of European security are beginning to take shape.

Real disarmament has begun. Its first phase is nearing completion, and following the signing, I hope shortly, of the START Treaty, the time will come to give practical consideration to the ideas which have already been put forward for the future. There seems, however, to be a need to develop a general concept for this new phase, which would embrace all negotiations concerning the principal components of the problem of disarmament and new ideas reflecting the changes in Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia, a concept that would incorporate recent major initiatives of President Bush and President Mitterand. We are now thinking about it.

Armed forces and military budgets are being reduced. Foreign troops are leaving the territories of other countries. Their strength is diminishing and their composition is becoming more defense-oriented. First steps have been taken in the conversion of military industries, and what seemed inconceivable is happening: recent Cold War adversaries are establishing cooperation in this area. Their military officials exchange visits, show each other military facilities that only recently used to be top secret and together consider ways to achieve demilitarization.

The information environment has changed beyond recognition throughout Europe and in most of the world, and with

it, the scale and intensity and the psychological atmosphere of communication among people of various countries.

De-ideologizing relations among States, which we proclaimed as one of the principles of the new thinking, has brought down many prejudices, biased attitudes and suspicions and has cleared and improved the international atmosphere. I have to note, however, that this process has been more intensive and frank on our part than on the part of the West.

I dare say that the European process has already acquired elements of irreversibility, or at least that conflicts of a scale and nature that were typical of Europe for many centuries and particularly in the twentieth century have been ruled out.

Should it gain the necessary momentum, every nation and every country will have at their disposal in the foreseeable future the potential of a community of unprecedented strength, encompassing the entire upper tier of the globe, provided they make their own contribution.

In such a context, in the process of creating a new Europe, in which erstwhile "curtains" and "walls" will be forever relegated to the past and borders between States will lose their "divisive" purpose, self-determination of sovereign nations will be realized in a completely different way.

However, our vision of the European space from the Atlantic to the Urals is not that of a closed system. Since it includes the Soviet Union, which reaches to the shores of the Pacific, and the transatlantic USA and Canada with inseparable links to the Old World, it goes beyond its nominal geographical boundaries.

The idea is not at all to consolidate a part of our civilization on, so to say, a European platform versus the rest of the world. Suspicions of that kind do exist. But, on the contrary, the idea is to develop and build upon the momentum of integration in Europe, embodied politically in the Charter of Paris for the whole of Europe. This should be done in the context of common movement towards a new and peaceful

period in world history, towards new interrelationship and integrity of mankind. As my friend Giulio Andreotti so aptly remarked recently in Moscow, "East-West rapprochement alone is not enough for progress of the entire world towards peace. However, agreement between them is a great contribution to the common cause". Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Near and Middle East, all of them, are to play a great role in this common cause whose prospects are difficult to forecast today.

The new integrity of the world, in our view, can be built only on the principles of the freedom of choice and balance of interests. Every State, and now also a number of existing or emerging regional interstate groups, have their own interests. They are all equal and deserve respect.

We consider it dangerously outdated when suspicions are aroused by, for instance, improved Soviet-Chinese or Soviet-German, German-French, Soviet-US or US-Indian relations, etc. In our times, good relations benefit all. Any worsening of relations anywhere is a common loss.

Progress towards the civilization of the 21st century will certainly not be simple or easy. One cannot get rid overnight of the heavy legacy of the past or the dangers created in the post-war years. We are experiencing a turning point in international affairs and are only at the beginning of a new, and I hope mostly peaceful, lengthy period in the history of civilization.

With less East-West confrontation, or even none at all, old contradictions resurface, which seemed of secondary importance compared to the threat of nuclear war. The melting ice of the Cold War reveals old conflicts and claims, and entirely new problems accumulate rapidly.

We can already see many obstacles and dangers on the road to a lasting peace, including:

- Increased nationalism, separatism, and disintegrational processes in a number of countries and regions;
- The growing gap in the level and quality of socio-economic development between "rich" and "poor" countries; dire consequences of the poverty of hundreds of

millions of people, to whom informational transparency makes it possible to see how people live in developed countries. Hence, the unprecedented passions and brutality and even fanaticism of mass protests. Poverty is also the breeding ground for the spread of terrorism and the emergence and persistence of dictatorial regimes with their unpredictable behavior in relations among States;

– The dangerously rapid accumulation of the "costs" of previous forms of progress, such as the threat of environmental catastrophe and of the depletion of energy and primary resources, uncontrollable overpopulation, pandemics, drug abuse, and so on;
– The gap between basically peaceful policies and selfish economies bent on achieving a kind of "technological hegemony". Unless those two vectors are brought together, civilization will tend to break down into incompatible sectors;
– Further improvements in modern weaponry, even if under the pretext of strengthening security. This may result not only in a new spiral of the arms race and a perilous overabundance of arms in many States, but also in a final divorce between the process of disarmament and development, and, what is more, in an erosion of the foundations and criteria of the emerging new world politics.

How can the world community cope with all this? All these tasks are enormously complex. They cannot be postponed. Tomorrow may be too late.

I am convinced that in order to solve these problems there is no other way but to seek and implement entirely new forms of interaction. Such interaction is indispensable if we are to consolidate positive trends which have emerged and are gaining strength, and which we simply must not sacrifice.

However, to accomplish this all members of the world community should resolutely discard old stereotypes and

motivations nurtured by the Cold War, and give up the habit of seeking each other's weak spots and exploiting them in their own interests. We have to respect the peculiarities and differences which will always exist, even when human rights and freedoms are observed throughout the world. I keep repeating that with the end of confrontation differences can be made a source of healthy competition, an important factor for progress. This is an incentive to study each other, to engage in exchanges, a prerequisite for the growth of mutual trust.

For knowledge and trust are the foundations of a new world order. Hence the necessity, in my view, to learn to forecast the course of events in various regions of the globe, by pooling the efforts of scientists, philosophers and humanitarian thinkers within the UN framework. Policies, even the most prudent and precise, are made by human beings. We need maximum insurance to guarantee that decisions taken by members of the world community should not affect the security, sovereignty and vital interests of its other members or damage the natural environment and the moral climate of the world.

I am an optimist and I believe that together we shall be able now to make the right historical choice so as not to miss the great chance at the turn of centuries and millenia and make the current extremely difficult transition to a peaceful world order. A balance of interests rather than a balance of power, a search for compromise and concord rather than a search for advantages at other people's expense, and respect for equality rather than claims to leadership – such are the elements which can provide the groundwork for world progress and which should be readily acceptable for reasonable people informed by the experience of the twentieth century.

The future prospect of truly peaceful global politics lies in the creation through joint efforts of a single international democratic space in which States shall be guided by the priority of human rights and welfare for their own citizens and the

promotion of the same rights and similar welfare elsewhere. This is an imperative of the growing integrity of the modern world and of the interdependence of its components.

I have been suspected of utopian thinking more than once, and particularly when five years ago I proposed the elimination of nuclear weapons by the year 2000 and joint efforts to create a system of international security. It may well be that by that date it will not have happened. But look, merely five years have passed and have we not actually and noticeably moved in that direction? Have we not been able to cross the threshold of mistrust, though mistrust has not completely disappeared? Has not the political thinking in the world changed substantially? Does not most of the world community already regard weapons of mass destruction as unacceptable for achieving political objectives?

Ladies and gentlemen, two weeks from today it will be exactly fifty years since the beginning of the Nazi invasion of my country. And in another six months we shall mark fifty years since Pearl Harbor, after which the war turned into a global tragedy. Memories of it still hurt. But they also urge us to value the chance given to the present generations.

In conclusion, let me say again that I view the award of the Nobel Prize to me as an expression of understanding of my intentions, my aspirations, the objectives of the profound transformation we have begun in our country, and the ideas of new thinking. I see it as your acknowledgment of my commitment to peaceful means of implementing the objectives of Perestroika.

I am grateful for this to the members of the Committee and wish to assure them that if I understand correctly their motives, they are not mistaken.

June 5, 1991

From the Address to the 43rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly

We have come here to show our respect for the United Nations, which increasingly has been manifesting its ability to act as a unique international center in the service of peace and security.

We have come here to show our respect for the dignity of this Organization, capable of accumulating the collective wisdom and will of mankind.

Recent events have been making it increasingly clear that the world needs such an organization, and that the Organization itself needs the active involvement of all its Members, their support for its initiatives and actions and their potentialities and original contributions that enrich its activity.

[...] The role played by the Soviet Union in world affairs is well known, and in view of the revolutionary Perestroika under way in our country, which contains a tremendous potential for peace and international co-operation, we are now particularly interested in being properly understood.

That is why we have come here to address this most authoritative world body and to share our thoughts with it. We want it to be the first to learn of our new, important decisions.

What will mankind be like when it enters the twenty-first century? People are already fascinated by this not-too-distant future. We are looking ahead to it with hopes for the best, and yet with a feeling of concern.

The world in which we live today is radically different from what it was at the beginning, or even in the middle, of this century, and it continues to change, as do all its components.

The advent of nuclear weapons was just another tragic reminder of the fundamental nature of that change. A material symbol and expression of absolute military power, nuclear weapons at the same time revealed the absolute limits

of that power. The problem of mankind's survival and self-preservation came to the fore.

We are witnessing most profound social change. Whether in the East or the South, the West or the North, hundreds of millions of people, new nations and States, new public movements and ideologies have moved to the forefront of history. Broad-based and frequently turbulent popular movements have given expression, in a multidimensional and contradictory way, to a longing for independence, democracy, and social justice. The idea of democratizing the entire world order has become a powerful socio-political force.

At the same time the scientific and technological revolution has turned many economic, food, energy, environmental, information and population problems, which only recently we treated as national or regional, into global problems.

Thanks to the advances in mass media and means of transportation the world seems to have become more visible and tangible. International communication has become easier than ever before. Today, the preservation of any kind of closed society is hardly possible. This calls for a radical review of approaches to the totality of the problems of international co-operation as a major element of universal security. The world economy is becoming a single organism, and no State, whatever its social system or economic status, can develop normally outside it. That places on the agenda the need to devise fundamentally new machinery for the functioning of the world economy, a new structure of the international division of labor.

At the same time, the growth of the world economy reveals the contradictions and limits inherent in traditional-type industrialization. Its further extension and intensification spell environmental catastrophe.

However, there are still many countries without sufficiently developed industries, and some have not yet moved beyond the pre-industrial stage. One of the major problems is whether they can join in the search for environmentally clean production. And there is another problem: instead of diminishing, the gap between the developed and most of the

developing countries is increasingly growing into a serious global threat. Hence the need to begin a search for a fundamentally new type of industrial progress, one that would meet the interests of all people and States.

In a word, the new realities are changing the entire world situation. The differences and contradictions inherited from the past are diminishing or being displaced, but new ones are emerging. Some of the past differences and disputes are losing their importance, but conflicts of a different kind are taking their place.

Life is making us abandon established stereotypes and outdated views. It is making us discard illusions. The very concept of the nature and criteria of progress is changing. It would be naïve to think that the problems plaguing mankind today can be solved with the means and methods that were applied or that seemed to work in the past. Indeed, mankind has accumulated a wealth of experience in the process of political, economic and social development under highly diverse conditions. But that experience belongs to the practices and to a world that have become, or are becoming, parts of the past. That is one of the signs of the crucial nature of the current phase of history.

The greatest philosophers sought to grasp the laws of social development and find an answer to the main question: How to make man's life happy, just and safe. Two great revolutions, the French Revolution of 1789 and the Russian Revolution of 1917, exerted a powerful impact on the very nature of history and radically changed the course of world developments. Both of them, each in its own way, gave a tremendous impetus to mankind's progress. To a large extent those two revolutions shaped the way of thinking that is still prevalent in social consciousness. It is a most precious spiritual heritage.

But today we face a different world, for which we must seek a different road to the future. In seeking it, we must, of course, draw upon accumulated experience and yet be aware of the fundamental differences between the situation yesterday and what we are facing today. Yet the novelty of the tasks

before us, as well as their difficulties, goes well beyond that. Today, we have entered an era when progress will be shaped by universal human interests. Awareness of that dictates that world politics, too, should be guided by the primacy of universal human values.

The history of past centuries and millennia was a history of wars that raged almost everywhere, of frequent desperate battles to the point of mutual annihilation. They grew out of clashes of social and political interests, national enmity, ideological or religious incompatibility. All that did happen. And even today, many would want those vestiges of the past to be accepted as immutable law.

However, concurrently with wars, animosities and divisions among peoples and countries, another trend, with equally objective causes, was gaining momentum: the process of the emergence of a mutually interrelated and integral world. Today, further world progress is possible only through a search for universal human consensus as we move forward to a new world order.

We have come to a point where the disorderly play of elemental forces leads to an impasse. The international community must learn how it can shape and guide developments in such a way as to preserve our civilization and to make it safe for all and conducive to normal life.

We are speaking of co-operation, which could be more accurately termed co-creation and co-development. The formula of development at the expense of others is on the way out. In the light of existing realities, no genuine progress is possible at the expense of the rights and freedoms of individuals and nations or at the expense of nature.

Efforts to solve global problems require a new scope and quality of interaction of States and socio-political currents, regardless of ideological or other differences.

Of course, radical changes and revolutionary transformations will continue to occur within individual countries and social structures. This is how it was and this is how it will be. But here, too, our time marks a change. Internal trans-

formations can no longer advance their national goals if they develop only along parallel courses with others without making use of the achievements of the outside world and of the potential inherent in equitable co-operation.

In those circumstances, any interference in such internal developments designed to redirect them to someone's liking would have all the more destructive consequences for the establishment of a peaceful order.

In the past differences were often a factor causing mutual rejection. Now, they have a chance of becoming a factor for mutual enrichment and mutual attraction.

Behind differences in social systems, in ways of life and in preferences for certain values stand different interests. There is no escaping that fact.

But, equally, there is no escaping the need to find a balance of interests within an international framework, which has become a condition for survival and progress.

Pondering all this, one comes to the conclusion that, if we are to take into account the lessons of the past and the realities of the present, if we are to reckon with the objective logic of world development, we must look together for ways to improve the international situation and build a new world, and, if so, we ought to agree on the basic, truly universal prerequisites and principles of such action.

It is obvious, for instance, that the use or threat of force can no longer, and must no longer, be an instrument of foreign policy. This applies, above all, to nuclear arms, but that is not the only thing that matters. All of us, and primarily the stronger of us, must exercise self-restraint and totally rule out any outward-oriented use of force. That is the first and the most important component of a non-violent world, an ideal which we proclaimed, together with India, in the Delhi Declaration and which we invite you to follow.

After all, it is now quite clear that building-up military power makes no country omnipotent. What is more, one-sided reliance on military power ultimately weakens other components of national security.

It is also quite clear to us that the principle of freedom of choice is mandatory. Its non-recognition is fraught with extremely grave consequences for world peace. Denying that right to peoples, under whatever pretext or rhetorical guise, jeopardizes even the fragile balance that has been attained. Freedom of choice is a universal principle that should allow of no exceptions.

It was not simply out of good intentions that we came to the conclusion that that principle was absolute. We were driven to it by an unbiased analysis of the objective trends of today. More and more characteristic of them is the increasingly multi-optional nature of social development in different countries. This applies both to the capitalist and to the socialist systems. The diversity of the socio-political structures that have grown out of national liberation movements over the past decades also attests to this.

This objective fact calls for respect for the views and positions of others, tolerance, a willingness to perceive something different as not necessarily bad or hostile, and an ability to learn to live side by side with others, while remaining different and not always agreeing with each other. As the world asserts its diversity, attempts to look down on others and to teach them one's own brand of democracy become totally improper, to say nothing of the fact that democratic values intended for export often lose their worth very quickly.

What we are talking about, therefore, is unity in diversity. If we assert this politically, if we reaffirm our adherence to freedom of choice, then there is no room for the view that some live on Earth by virtue of divine will, while others are here quite by chance. The time has come to discard such thinking and to shape our policies accordingly. This would open up prospects for strengthening the unity of the world.

The new phase also requires de-ideologizing relations among States. We are not abandoning our convictions, our philosophy or traditions, nor do we urge anyone to abandon theirs. However, neither do we have any intention of being hemmed in by our values, which would result in intellectual

impoverishment, for it would mean rejecting a powerful source of development – the exchange of everything original that each nation has independently created.

In the course of such exchange, let everyone show the advantages of their social systems, their way of life and their values, not just by words or propaganda, but by real deeds. That would be a fair rivalry of ideologies. But it should not be extended to relations among States, otherwise we would simply be unable to solve any of the world's problems, such as developing wide-ranging, mutually beneficial and equitable co-operation among nations; making efficient use of the achievements of scientific and technological revolution; restructuring the world economy and protecting the environment; and overcoming backwardness and eliminating hunger, disease, illiteracy and other global scourges. Similarly, we would not be able to eliminate the nuclear threat and militarism.

These are our reflections on the patterns of world development on the threshold of the twenty-first century.

Of course, we are far from claiming to be in possession of the ultimate truth, but, on the basis of a thorough analysis of the past and newly-emerging realities, we have concluded that it is on these lines that we should jointly seek the way to the supremacy of the universal human idea over the endless multitude of centrifugal forces, and to preserve the vitality of this civilization, which is possibly the only one in the entire universe.

Could this view be a little too romantic? Are we not overestimating the potential and maturity of the world's social consciousness? We have heard such doubts and such questions, both in our country and from some of our Western partners.

I am convinced that we are not floating above reality. Forces have already emerged in the world that in one way or another stimulate the arrival of a period of peace. The peoples and large sectors of the public do, indeed, ardently wish for an improvement in the situation. They want to learn to co-operate. It is sometimes amazing how powerful this trend is. It is also important that it is beginning to shape policies.

Changes in philosophical approaches and in political relations form a solid prerequisite for imparting, in line with worldwide objective processes, a powerful impetus to the efforts designed to establish new relations among States. Even those politicians whose activities used to be geared to the Cold War and sometimes linked with its most critical phases are now drawing appropriate conclusions. Of all people, they find it particularly hard to abandon old stereotypes and past practices, and, if even they are changing course, it is clear that, when new generations take over, opportunities will increase in number.

In short, the understanding of the need for a period of peace is gaining ground and beginning to prevail. This has made it possible to take the first real steps towards creating a healthier international environment and towards disarmament.

What are the practical implications of that? It would be natural and sensible not to abandon everything positive that has already been accomplished and to build on the gains of the past few years, on all that we have created working together. I refer to the process of negotiations on nuclear arms, conventional weapons and chemical weapons and the search for political approaches to ending regional conflicts. Of course, I refer, above all, to political dialogue – a more intense and open dialogue aimed at the very heart of problems instead of confrontation, at an exchange of constructive ideas instead of recriminations. Without political dialogue, the process of negotiations cannot advance.

We regard prospects for the near and more distant future quite optimistically. Just look at the changes in our relations with the United States. Little by little, mutual understanding has started to develop and elements of trust have emerged, without which it is very hard to make headway in politics.

In Europe, such elements are even more numerous. The Helsinki process is a great process. I believe that it remains fully valid. Its philosophical, political, practical and other dimensions must all be preserved and enhanced, while taking into account new circumstances.

Current realities make it imperative that the dialogue that ensures normal and constructive evolution of international affairs involve, on a continuous and active basis, all countries and regions of the world, including such major powers as India, China, Japan and Brazil, and other countries – big, medium and small.

[...] Everyone should join in the movement towards greater world unity. [...]

Yet, in my talks with foreign Government and political leaders, with whom I have had over 200 meetings, I have sometimes sensed their dissatisfaction that at this crucial time, for one reason or another, they sometimes find themselves on the sidelines, as it were, of the main issues of world politics. It is natural and appropriate that no one is willing to resign himself to that.

If, although different, we are indeed part of the same civilization, if we are aware of the interdependence of the contemporary world, this fact must be increasingly present in politics and in practical efforts to harmonize international relations. Perhaps the term Perestroika would not be quite appropriate in this context, but I do call for the building of new international relations.

I am convinced that our time and the realities of today's world make it necessary to internationalize dialogue and the negotiating process. This is the main, most general conclusion that we have come to in studying the global trends that have been gaining momentum in recent years and in participating in world politics.

In this specific historical situation we face the question of a new role for the United Nations. We feel that States must to some extent review their attitude to the United Nations – this unique instrument without which world politics would be inconceivable today. The recent reinvigoration of its peacemaking role has again demonstrated the ability of the United Nations to assist its members in coping with the daunting challenges of our time and working to humanize their relations.

Regrettably, shortly after it was established the Organization sustained the onslaught of the cold war. For many years

it was the scene of propaganda battles and continuous political confrontation. Let historians argue who is more and who is less to blame for this. What political leasers today need to do is to draw lessons from that chapter in the history of the United Nations, which turned out to be at odds with the very meaning and objectives of our Organization. One of the most bitter and important lessons lies in the long list of missed opportunities. As a result, at a certain point the authority of the United Nations diminished, and many of its attempts to act failed.

It is highly significant that the reinvigoration of the role of the United Nations is linked to an improvement in the international climate. In a way, the United Nations blends together the interests of different States. It is the only Organization capable of merging into a single current their bilateral, regional and global efforts.

New prospects are opening up for it in all areas that fall naturally under its responsibility – the politico-military, economic, scientific, technological, environmental and humanitarian areas. Let us take, for example, the problem of development, which is a truly universal human problem. The conditions in which tens of millions of people live in a number of third-world regions are becoming a real threat to mankind.

[...] What is needed here is to combine the efforts and take into account the interests of all groups of countries — something that only this Organization, the United Nations, can accomplish.

External debt is one of the gravest problems. Let us not forget that in the age of colonialism the developing world, at the cost of countless losses and sacrifices, financed the prosperity of a large portion of the world community. The time has come to make up for the losses that accompanied its historic and tragic contribution to global material progress.

We are convinced that here, too, the internationalization of our approach offers a way out. [...]

We invite members to consider the following: limiting the developing countries official debt-servicing payments, de-

pending on the economic performance of each of them, or granting them a long period of deferral of the repayment of a major portion of their debt; supporting the appeal of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development for reduction of debts to commercial banks; guaranteeing government support for market arrangements to assist in third-world debt settlement, including the formation of a specialized international agency that would repurchase debts at a discount.

The Soviet Union favors a substantive discussion in multilateral forums of ways of settling the debt crisis, including consultations, under the auspices of the United Nations, among Heads of Government of debtor and creditor countries.

International economic security is inconceivable unless related not only to disarmament but also to the elimination of the threat to the world's environment. In a number of regions the state of the environment is simply frightening. A conference on the environment within the framework of the United Nations is scheduled for 1992. We welcome this decision and are working to ensure that this forum produces results commensurate with the scope of the problem.

But time is running out, although much is being done in various countries. Here again I should just like to underscore most emphatically the prospects opening up in the process of disarmament – particularly, of course, nuclear disarmament – for environmental revival.

Let us also think about setting up within the framework of the United Nations a center for emergency environmental assistance. Its function would be to send international groups of experts without delay to areas with a badly deteriorating environment. The Soviet Union is also ready to co-operate in establishing an international space laboratory or manned orbital station designed exclusively for monitoring the state of the environment.

In the general area of space exploration the outlines of a future space industry are becoming increasingly clear. The position of the Soviet Union is well known: activities in outer space must rule out the appearance of weapons there. Here

again there has to be a legal base. The groundwork for it – the provisions of the 1967 Treaty and other agreements – is already in place.

However, there is already a strongly felt need to develop an all-embracing regime that would be entrusted to a world space organization. We have put forward on more than one occasion our proposal to establish such an organization. [...] The entire system could function under the auspices of the United Nations.

The whole world welcomes the efforts of this Organization, its Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, and his representatives in untying knots of regional problems. I should like to elaborate on this. Paraphrasing the words of the English poet that Hemingway took as an epigraph for his famous novel, I will say this: the bell of every regional conflict tolls for all of us.

That is particularly true since those conflicts are taking place in the third world, which already faces many ills and problems of such magnitude that is has to be a matter of concern to us all.

The year 1988 has brought a glimmer of hope in this area of our common concerns as well. That has been felt in almost all regional crises. On some of them, there has been movement. We welcome it, and we did what we could to contribute to it.

[...] The concept of comprehensive international security is based on the principles of the United Nations Charter and is predicated on the binding nature of international law for all States.

Being in favor of demilitarizing international relations, we want political and legal methods to prevail in solving whatever problems may arise.

Our ideal is a world community of States which are based on the rule of law and which subordinate their foreign policy activities to law.

The achievement of that goal would be facilitated by an agreement within the United Nations on a uniform under-

standing of the principles and norms of international law, their codification with due regard to new conditions and the development of legal norms for new areas of co-operation.

In a nuclear age the effectiveness of international law should be based not on enforcing compliance but rather on norms reflecting a balance of State interests.

In addition to the ever-increasing awareness of the objective commonality of our destiny, that would make every State genuinely interested in exercising self-restraint within the bounds of international law.

Democratizing international relations means not only a maximum degree of internationalization in the efforts of all members of the world community to solve problems; it also means humanizing those relations.

International ties will fully reflect the genuine interests of the peoples and effectively serve the cause of their common security only when the human being and his concerns, rights and freedoms become the center of all things.

In that context, I should like to join the voice of my country in the expressions of high appreciation of the significance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted 40 years ago on 10 December 1948.

Today, that document retains its significance. It, too, reflects the universal nature of the goals and objectives of the United Nations.

The most fitting way for a State to observe the anniversary of the Declaration is to improve its domestic conditions for respecting and protecting the rights of its own citizens.

Before I inform you on what specifically we have undertaken recently in that respect, I should like to say the following.

Our country is going through a period of truly revolutionary uplifting.

The process of Perestroika is gaining momentum. [...]

The theoretical work, a reassessment of what is happening, the finalization, enrichment and readjustment of political positions have not been competed. They are continuing.

But it was essential to begin with an overall concept, which, as now confirmed by the experience of these past years, has generally proved to be correct and has no alternative.

For our society to participate in efforts to implement the plans of Perestroika, it had to be democratized in practice. Under the sign of democratization, Perestroika has now spread to politics, the economy, intellectual life and ideology.

We have initiated a radical economic reform. We have gained experience. At the start of the next year, the entire national economy will be redirected to new forms and methods of operation. [...]

Undertaking such bold revolutionary transformations, we realized that there would be mistakes, and also opposition, that new approaches would generate new problems. We also foresaw the possibility of slow-downs in some areas.

But the guarantee that the overall process of Perestroika will steadily move forward and gain strength lies in a profound democratic reform of the entire system of power and administration.

With the recent decisions by the USSR Supreme Soviet on amendments to the Constitution and the adoption of the Law on Elections, we have completed the first stage of the process of political reform.

Without pausing, we have begun the second stage of this process with the main task of improving the relationship between the center and the republics [...].

A great deal of work lies ahead. Major tasks will have to be dealt with concurrently.

[...] Soviet democracy will be placed on a solid normative base. I am referring, in particular, to laws on the freedom of conscience, glasnost, public associations, organizations, and many others.

In places of confinement there are no persons convicted for their political or religious beliefs.

Additional guarantees are to be included in the new draft laws that rule out any form of persecution on those grounds.

Naturally this does not apply to those who have committed actual criminal offences or State crimes, such as espionage, sabotage, terrorism and so on, whatever their political or ideological beliefs. Draft amendments to the penal code have been prepared and are awaiting their turn. Among the articles being revised are those relating to capital punishment.

The problem of exit from and entry to our country, including the question of leaving it for family reunification, is being dealt with in a humane spirit. As the Assembly will know, one of the reasons for refusal of permission to leave is a person's knowledge of secrets. Strictly warranted time limitations on the secrecy rule will now be applied. [...] This removes from the agenda the problem of the so-called refuseniks.

We intend to expand the Soviet Union's participation in the human rights monitoring arrangements of the United Nations and the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). We believe that the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice at The Hague as regards the interpretation and implementation of agreements on human rights should be binding on all States. [...]

Overall, this is our credo: political problems must be solved by political means only; human problems in a humane way only.

Let me now turn to the main issue without which none of the problems of the coming century can be solved: disarmament.

International development and communications have been distorted by the arms race and the militarization of thinking. As the Assembly will know, on 15 January 1986 the Soviet Union put forward a program for building a nuclear-weapon-free world. Translated into actual negotiating positions, it has already produced material results. Tomorrow marks the first anniversary of the signing of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles – INF Treaty. I am therefore particularly pleased to note that the implementation

of the Treaty – the elimination of missiles – is proceeding normally in an atmosphere of trust and businesslike work. A large breach has thus been made in a seemingly unbreakable wall of suspicion and animosity. We are witnessing the emergence of a new, historic reality; a turning away from the principle of super-armament to the principle of reasonable defense sufficiency.

We are present at the birth of a new model of ensuring security, not through the build-up of arms, as was almost always the case in the past, but on the contrary through their reduction on the basis of compromise. The Soviet leadership has decided to demonstrate once again its readiness to reinforce this healthy process, not only by worlds but also by deeds.

Today I can report to the General Assembly that the Soviet Union has taken a decision to reduce its armed forces. Within the next two years their numerical strength will be reduced by 500,000 men. The numbers of conventional armaments will also be substantially reduced. This will be done unilaterally, without relation to the talks on the mandate of the Vienna meeting.

By agreement with our Warsaw Treaty allies we have decided to withdraw, by 1991, six tank divisions from the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia and Hungary and to disband them. Assault landing troops and several other formations and units, including assault crossing units with their weapons and combat equipment, will also be withdrawn from the groups of Soviet forces stationed in those countries. Soviet forces stationed in those countries will be reduced by 50,000 men and their armaments by 5,000 tanks.

All Soviet divisions remaining for the time being on the territories of our allies are being reorganized. Their structure will be different from what it is now; after a major cutback in their tanks it will become clearly defensive.

At the same time we shall reduce the numerical strength of the armed forces and the numbers of armaments stationed in the European part of the Soviet Union. In total, Soviet armed forces in this part of our country and in the

territories of our European allies will be reduced by 10,000 tanks, 8,500 artillery systems and 800 combat aircraft.

Over these two years we intend to reduce significantly our armed forces in the Asian part of our country too. By agreement with the Government of the Mongolian People's Republic a major portion of Soviet troops temporarily stationed there will return home.

In taking this fundamental decision the Soviet leadership is expressing the will of the people, who have undertaken a profound renewal of their entire socialist society. We shall maintain our country's defense capability at a level of reasonable and reliable sufficiency so that no one tempted to encroach on the security of the Soviet Union and our allies.

By all our activities in favor of demilitarizing international relations we wish to draw the attention of the international community to yet another pressing problem: the problem of transition from the economy of armaments to an economy of disarmament. Is conversion of military production a realistic idea? I have already had occasion to speak about this. We think that it is indeed realistic.

[...] It would be useful to set up a group of scientists to undertake a thorough analysis of the problem of conversion as a whole and as applied to individual countries and regions and report to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and subsequently for this matter to be considered at a session of the General Assembly.

Finally, since I am here on American soil, and also for other obvious reasons, I have to turn to the subject of our relations with this great country. I had a chance to appreciate the full measure of its hospitality during my memorable visit to Washington exactly a year ago.

Relations been the Soviet Union and the United States of America have a history of five and a half decades. As the world has changed, so have the nature, role and place of those relations in world politics. For too long they developed along the lines of confrontation and sometimes animosity, either overt or covert. But in the last few years the entire world has

been able to breathe a sigh of relief, thanks to the changes for the better in the substance and the atmosphere of the relationship between Moscow and Washington.

No one intends to underestimate the seriousness of our differences and the toughness of our outstanding problems. We have, however, already graduated from the primary school of learning to understand each other and seek solutions in both our own and the common interest.

The USSR and the United States have built the largest nuclear and missile arsenals; but it is those two counties that, having become specifically aware of their responsibility, have been the first to conclude a treaty on the reduction and physical elimination of a portion of their armaments which posed a threat to both of them and to all other countries. Both countries possess the greatest and most sophisticated military secrets; but it is those two counties that have laid a basis for and are further developing a system of mutual verification both of the elimination of armaments and of the reduction and prohibition of their production. It is those two countries that are accumulating experience for future bilateral and multilateral agreements.

We value this. We acknowledge and appreciate the contributions made by President Ronald Reagan and by the members of his Administration, particularly Mr. George Shultz.

All this is our joint investment in a venture of historic importance. We must not lose that investment, or leave it idle.

The next United States administration, headed by President-elect George Bush, will find us a partner who is ready-without long pauses or backtracking – to continue the dialogue in a spirit of realism, openness and goodwill, with a willingness to achieve concrete results working on the agenda which covers the main issues of Soviet/United States relations and world politics.

I have in mind, above all, consistent movement towards a treaty on 50-percent reductions in strategic offensive arms while preserving the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty); working out a convention

on the elimination of chemical weapons – here, as we see it, prerequisites exist to make 1989 a decisive year; and negotiations on the reduction of conventional arms and armed forces in Europe.

I also have in mind economic, environmental and humanistic problems in their broadest sense.

It would be quite wrong to put the positive changes in the international situation exclusively to the credit of the USSR and the United States. [...]

During the course of negotiations we are constantly aware of the presence of other major Powers, both nuclear and non-nuclear. Many countries, including medium-sized and small countries, and of course the Non-Aligned Movement and the intercontinental Group of Six, are playing a uniquely important constructive role.

We in Moscow are happy that an ever-increasing number of statesmen, political, party and public figures and-I should like to emphasize this – scientists, cultural figures, representatives of mass movements and various churches, and activists of the so-called people's diplomacy are ready to shoulder the burden of universal responsibility.

In this regard I believe that the idea of convening on a regular basis, under the auspices of the United Nations, an assembly of public organizations deserves attention.

We are not inclined to simplify the situation in the world.

Yes, the trend towards disarmament has been given a powerful impetus, and the process is gaining a momentum of its own. But it has not yet become irreversible.

Yes, the willingness to give up confrontation in favor of dialogue and co-operation is being felt strongly. But it is still far from becoming a permanent feature in the practice of international relations.

Yes, movement towards a nuclear-weapon-free and non-violent world is capable of radically transforming the political and intellectual identity of our planet. But only the first steps have been taken, and even they have been met with mistrust in certain influential quarters and face resistance.

The legacy and the inertia of the past continue to be felt. Profound contradictions and the roots of many conflicts have not disappeared. And there remains another fundamental fact, which is that a peaceful period will be taking shape in the context of the existence and rivalry of different socio-economic and political systems.

However, the thrust of our international efforts and one of the key elements of the new thinking is that this rivalry should be given a quality of reasonable competition with due regard for freedom of choice and balance of interests. Then it would even become useful and productive from the standpoint of global development.

Otherwise, if as in the past the arms race remains its basic component, this rivalry would be deadly. More and more people throughout the world – leaders as well as ordinary people – are beginning to understand that.

I conclude my first address to the United Nations with the same feeling that I had when I began it – a feeling of responsibility to my own people and to the world community.

We are meeting at the end of a year which has meant so much for the United Nations and on the eve of a year from which we all expect so much.

I should like to believe that our hopes will be matched by our joint efforts to put an end to an era of wars, confrontation and regional conflicts, to aggressions against nature, to the terror of hunger and poverty as well as to political terrorism.

That is our common goal and we can only reach it together.

December 7, 1988

Final Televized Address as President of the USSR

Addressing you for the last time as President of the USSR, I find it necessary to state my position with regard to the path we have embarked upon since 1985 – especially since controversial, superficial and biased judgements abound.

Fate had decided that, when I became head of state, it was already obvious that there was something wrong in this country. We had plenty of everything: land, oil, gas and other natural resources, and God has also endowed us with intellect and talent – yet we lived much worse than people in other industrialized countries and the gap was constantly widening.

The reason was apparent even then – our society was stifled in the grip of a bureaucratic command system. Doomed to serve ideology and bear the heavy burden of the arms race, it was strained to the utmost.

All attempts at implementing half-hearted reforms – and there have been many – failed, one after the other. The country was losing hope. We could not go on living like this. We had to change everything radically.

For this reason, I never regretted that I did not use my position as General Secretary merely to 'reign' for a few years. This would have been irresponsible and immoral.

I understood that initiating reforms on such a large scale in a society like ours was a most difficult and risky undertaking. But even now, I am convinced that the democratic reforms started in the spring of 1985 were historically justified.

The process of renovating this country and bringing about fundamental changes in the international community proved to be much more complex than originally anticipated. However, let us acknowledge what has been achieved so far.

Society has acquired freedom; it has been freed politically and spiritually. And this is the most important achievement,

which we have not fully come to grips with, in part because we still have not learned how to use our freedom. However, a historic task has been accomplished:

- The totalitarian system, which prevented this country from becoming wealthy and prosperous a long time ago, has been dismantled.
- A breakthrough has been made on the road to democratic reforms. Free elections, freedom of the press, freedom of worship, representative legislatures, and a multi-party system have all become realities.
- We have set out to introduce a pluralistic economy, and the equality of all forms of ownership is being established. In the course of the land reform, the peasantry is reviving, individual farmers have appeared and millions of hectares of land have been allocated to the urban and rural population. Laws were passed on the economic freedom of producers, and free enterprise, shareholding and privatization are under way.
- Shifting the course of our economy towards a free market, we must not forget that this is being done for the benefit of the individual. In these times of hardship, everything must be done to ensure the social protection of the individual – particularly old people and children.

We live in a new world:

- An end has been put to the Cold War, the arms race and the insane militarization of our country, which crippled our economy, distorted our thinking and undermined our morals. The threat of a world war is no more.

Once again, I should like to stress that I have done everything in my power during the transition period to ensure safe control over nuclear weapons.

- We opened ourselves up to the rest of the world, renounced interference in the affairs of others and the use of troops beyond our borders. In response, we have gained trust, solidarity and respect.

- We have become a major stronghold for the reorganization of modern civilization on the basis of peaceful, democratic principles.
- The peoples and nations of this country have acquired genuine freedom to choose their own way towards self-determination. The quest for a democratic reform of our multinational state has led us to the point where we were about to sign a new Union treaty.

All these changes demanded utmost exertion and were carried through under conditions of an unrelenting struggle against the growing resistance from the old, obsolete and reactionary forces – the former Party and state structures and the economic management apparatus – as well as our patterns, our ideological prejudices, our egalitarian and parasitic psychology. The change ran up against our intolerance, a low level of political culture and a fear of change. That is why we have wasted so much time. The old system tumbled down before the new one could begin functioning. And our society slid into an even deeper crisis.

I am aware of the dissatisfaction with today's grave situation, the harsh criticisms of the authorities at all levels and of my personal role. But I would like to stress once again: in so vast a country, given its heritage, fundamental changes cannot be carried out without difficulties and pain.

The August coup brought the overall crisis to a breaking point. The most disastrous aspect of this crisis is the collapse of statehood. And today I watch apprehensively the loss of the citizenship of a great country by our citizens – the consequences of this could be grave, for all of us.

I consider it vitally important to sustain the democratic achievements of the last few years. We have earned them through the suffering of our entire history and our tragic experience. We must not abandon them under any circumstances, under any pretext. Otherwise, all our hopes for a better future will be buried.

I am speaking of this frankly and honestly. It is my moral duty.

Today I want to express my gratitude to all those citizens who have given their support to the policy of renovating this country and who participated in the democratic reforms.

I am thankful to statesmen, political and public leaders and millions of ordinary people in other countries – to all those who understood our objectives and gave us their support, meeting us halfway and offering genuine co-operation.

I leave my post with concern – but also with hope, with faith in you, your wisdom and spiritual strength. We are the heirs of a great civilization, and its revival and transformation to a modern and dignified life depend on all and everyone.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to those who stood by my side, defending the right and good cause over all these years. We certainly could have avoided certain errors and done better in many ways. But I am convinced that, sooner or later, our common efforts will bear fruit and our peoples will live in a prosperous and democratic society.

I wish all the best to everyone.

December 25, 1991

Twenty Years Since the Start of Perestroika

Three events in Russia's history during the XX century were of paramount importance for Russia itself and for the rest of the world: the 1917 Revolution, victory over Nazism in the second world war – our Great Patriotic War – and Perestroika in the century's final quarter.

Starting in 1982, three General Secretaries of the Communist Part Central Committee died one after another – Leonid Brezhnev, Yuri Andropov, and Konstantin Chernenko. The need for a generational change at the top of the power hierarchy was obvious to everyone. Society wanted change. The recurring theme in the assessment of the situation in the USSR was: We can no longer live like this.

Indeed, a country that was immensely rich in both intellectual and natural resources was unable to provide proper living conditions for its citizens. Unwieldy economy and the stranglehold of bureaucracy at all levels of government were impeding necessary changes. Lack of freedom was stifling the country. Stalinism and the system it created were being rejected at the level of the culture.

On top of that, the increasingly stagnant economy was lagging behind in international competition. Growth rates were down. Productivity was less than one third of western levels in industry, and one-fifth in agriculture.

The Soviet economy was wasteful and cost-heavy. The quality of its products was up to world standards only in the military-industrial complex.

The negative socio-economic, political and cultural processes affecting the Soviet Union were weakening its foreign policy position. Changes were long overdue; postponing them was not an option.

The rest of the world, too, needed major changes at a time when military alliances were at loggerheads and confrontation resulted in a dangerous arms race, particularly the nuclear weapons buildup; when regional conflicts were raging throughout the world; when the world's most ur-

gent problems such as backwardness, poverty and the global threat to the environment remained unaddressed; and when centrifugal tendencies were affecting the world socialist community.

This confluence of external and internal factors objectively dictated the need for change. The policy of Perestroika and its philosophical foundation – the new political thinking – were a response to the problems facing not only the USSR but the rest of the world as well.

On March 11, 1985, a plenary meeting of the Central Committee elected me General Secretary. This was done in the circumstances that made it abundantly clear that what was needed was not just the election of a new leader but moving toward a new leadership.

There were several groups within the Central Committee. Some wanted to preserve the status quo. However, a group of relatively young members of the Soviet leadership, promoted by Yuri Andropov, and some members of the older generation understood the need for new leadership.

Nor could the sentiment prevailing in Soviet society be ignored: people were highly critical of the leaders of the party and government who had been in charge.

With the General Secretary often ill, I had had to substitute for him at Politburo meetings. At the time, it was important to avoid destabilization of the country. All that, as well as my experience in politics from 1955, when I graduated from the University, to 1985 – as youth organization leader, regional leader, and for seven years member of the top leadership under Brezhnev, Andropov and Chernenko – turned out to be decisive.

* * *

For the Soviet Union Perestroika meant overcoming totalitarianism and moving toward freedom and democracy. Yet, this did not happen at once.

We started with the illusory hope of 'improving socialism within the existing system.' But toward the end of

1986, it had already become clear to me and my associates that renewal could not be achieved by hewing to the old approaches.

Upon reflection, we decided to take major steps to reform the system.

We chose an evolutionary approach to reforming Soviet society on the principles of freedom, democracy and market economics – which, in effect, amounted to a social-democratic project. Its implementation was to result in harmonizing private and public interests, placing the human being at the center of our society's development.

The years of Perestroika brought about:

- transition from totalitarianism to democracy;
- pluralism in politics and economics;
- affirmation of the principles of freedom of choice and freedom of conscience and religion;
- acceptance of dissent;
- our country opened up to the world by adopting a law on freedom of movement, including freedom to leave;
- the republics, working together, drafted and prepared for signing a new Union Treaty.

The attempted coup in August 1991, followed later by the agreement to dissolve the Union, broke off the process of Perestroika. What happened subsequently, during the 1990s, was based on a different strategy and different methods.

Central to Boris Yeltsin's plan was the idea of destruction: the breakup of the Union, 'shock therapy,' the kind of privatization that amounted to plundering the nation's wealth, etc. The result was 'wildcat capitalism,' chaos, and division of society.

When I am asked whether Perestroika won or was defeated my reply is unambiguous: Perestroika won. Even though it was interrupted as a result two conspiracies, it brought the processes of change to a point from which a return to the past is no longer possible.

Today, Russia is facing a moment of choice:

– either it will follow the inertia of the 1990s Yeltsin's reforms, which broke down the state and the economy and impoverished tens of millions of people,
– or, based on the prerequisites created during the first years of Vladimir Putin's presidency, it will choose the path of truly democratic reforms that take account of its unique identity, its historic experience and cultural and intellectual potential.

Which way the country goes must be decided in the near future.

* * *

While it changed our country's internal dynamics, Perestroika also brought about fundamental changes in its foreign policy. This was not easy to accomplish, but we had enough patience, and the situation began to evolve for the better.

Dialogue resumed and relations began to improve with the United States. A treaty was signed eliminating a whole class of nuclear weapons. It was the first such treaty in history – and a first step toward ultimately abolishing nuclear weapons, as I proposed on January 15, 1986.

Hostility with China came to an end, and friendship with the great nation of India flourished. Arms reductions were agreed in the European continent. Under the influence of Perestroika profound democratic reforms started in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The USSR took a firm stand of non-interference. We remained faithful to the principle of freedom of choice for all without exception.

Eventually, this made possible peaceful unification of Germany in the interest of the Germans themselves and of the world. At the Malta summit in 1989 the leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States declared that we no longer regarded our countries as enemies. A conference of all European nations in Paris adopted a Charter for a New Europe, whose main ideas are still valid. The doctrines of the military alliances began to change.

I think that the achievements of Perestroika were made possible by the fact that we had not erred in our analysis and evaluation of the situation in our country and in the world, in recognizing some fundamental truths and acting upon it.

We recognized that the country was in need of major changes, and in the second phase of perestroika we concluded that the system had to be replaced.

We recognized that, in addition to class, national and state interests, there were also the universal interest of humanity, and that the main interest – ridding mankind of the threat of self-destruction – had the highest priority.

We recognized that we were living in an interrelated and interdependent world in which no country could alone assure its security and well-being.

Hence, our fundamental strategic decisions, our commitment to freedom, democracy, the rule of law, and to ending the arms race and global confrontation.

The lessons of that time are still relevant today, when the world is rapidly changing – indeed, in some ways it has changed beyond recognition.

Today, just like twenty years ago, it is important not to err in the analysis of the situation and of its main trends.

* * *

We are facing a complex, contradictory and rapidly changing world. What are its defining features?

They include:

– an even greater degree of interconnectedness and interdependence and all that we call globalization – and, at the same time, failure to include billions of people in that process;
– the emergence in the world arena of new giants – China, India, and Brazil – whose political and economic influence is increasingly felt throughout the world;
– a special role played by the United States as the sole remaining superpower;

– the emergence of Europe, uniting and expanding, as a major positive factor;
– the democratic transition of Russia and the other post-Soviet states and, more generally, the global advance of democracy;
– finally, the adjustment of the Islamic world to the challenges of our time and the problems associated with this process.

This, then, is the world in which we live and in which mankind is seeking responses to the main challenges of the XXI century: the challenge of security, the challenge of poverty and backwardness, and the challenge of the global environmental crisis.

In the mid-1980s we saw as our main task and our highest priority preventing a nuclear conflict and ending the arms race. We proposed new thinking as the alternative to the old approaches and, working together, we accomplished that most urgent task.

Our new thinking was not an epiphany arising out of nowhere. It drew upon the fundamental principles of international law and international cooperation.

I believe that today we need new thinking for a new age. It should absorb all that is valuable in the legacy of the XX century while at the same time taking into account the changes and the problems that we confront at the dawn of the new century, the defining features of the current phase in world developments that I have just outlined.

I lay no claim to being able to formulate in every detail an updated version of new thinking. At my age such a pretension would not be serious. But let me share with you some thoughts in this regard.

Globalization: Yes, it is an objective and inevitable process. Yet, so long as it has done little or nothing for billions of people, the world is in serious jeopardy. We should pay attention to those who call for globalization with a human face and discern positive elements in their demands.

New centers of power: They should become organic and responsible participants in the global processes. Relations with them should be free of confrontation or attempts to isolate them or play geopolitical games.

The role of the United States: Given its power, its democratic traditions and cultural and economic influence, America can claim leadership – but this leadership should be exercised through partnership rather than domination.

The uniting Europe: Its positive potential should be fully recognized, rejecting attempts to divide it into "new" and "old." For its part, Europe needs to find an optimum pace and format of integration, a model of building a Greater Europe both from the east and from the west.

Democratic transition of Russia and other countries: It has proved to be more difficult and painful than many expected. We should trust the new democracies, understanding that they must find their own way to a democratic society. No attempts should be made to impose democracy through any kind of interference, whether by military invasion or by implanting in their unprepared soil the economic models of advanced countries.

The Islamic world: It needs understanding and respect. Prerequisites are emerging within it for adaptation to the rapidly changing world. It has tremendous human, historical and cultural potential. Over the past centuries it gave the world a great deal, enriching its science and culture. An equitable and mutually respectful dialogue with it is not only possible – it is the only way to go.

Thus, we are facing a new world in which there is a great need for rethinking the role of the West in the global processes.

Clearly, we need to act urgently:

- uniting our efforts in meeting the global challenges;
- overcoming the inertia in the minds of people, in politics, in governance, in conducting the affairs of the global world;
- developing a new strategy and generating the political will capable of addressing the world's problems. We

need a kind of global social compact on the principles of a new world architecture that would form the foundation of nations' life while preserving ethnic and cultural diversity;

– creating an effective mechanism to implement agreed solutions to the world's most urgent problems. A first step in this direction could be a real mechanism to implement the solemn pledge to allocate 0.7 percent of the developed nations' GDP for assistance in fighting poverty.

The most imperative need in the world today is to start working step by step for better governance at the national, regional and global level, starting with a real reform of the United Nations.

There is broad understanding in the world of the need to move to a genuinely new world order, and of the need for leadership in this process.

It is my profound conviction that we must break out of old-style, hopelessly outdated politics. We already live in a different world, and it keeps changing rapidly. We should no longer accept the fact that politics are lagging behind these changes. The price we are paying this failure is too high even now.

What, then, is the world and the peace that we should strive for? Let me quote the words of President John F. Kennedy. Speaking on June 10, 1963, at American University in Washington, he said:

"The most important topic on earth [is] world peace.

What kind of peace do I mean? What kind of peace do we seek? Not a Pax Americana enforced on the world by American weapons of war. Not the peace of the grave or the security of the slave. I am talking about genuine peace, the kind of peace that makes life on earth worth living, the kind that enables men and nations to grow and to hope and to build a better life for their children – not merely peace for Americans but peace for all men and women – not merely peace in our time but peace for all time. [...]

Genuine peace must be the product of many nations, the sum of many acts. It must be dynamic, not static, changing to meet the challenge of each new generation. For peace is a process – a way of solving problems."

The situation we face today is similar in its significance for the destiny of humankind. It calls for new vision, a new kind of world politics, and greater political will and responsibility.

Finally, let me remind you of John Kennedy's words that a society that cannot help the many who are poor cannot save the few who are rich. Today this thought is fully applicable on a global scale. We will have either a future for all or no future at all.

October 21, 2005

Speeches

Articles

Interviews

9/11: Letter to the New York Times

My first reaction to the tragedy that struck America on September 11 was to send a cable to President Bush. I expressed my profound condolences and feelings of solidarity with the American people. This terrible crime was committed not only against America but against all humankind. It is now facing an unprecedented challenge. It is only by common efforts that we will be able to find the response to it.

The time will come to discuss problems such as the roots of fanaticism and violence and ways of dealing with them. What is needed now is to support the people of America, of New York and Washington, who will need a lot of courage and strength in the days ahead. The hour of trouble must not become an hour of despair. Americans should know that in these days the Russian people are with them. We see that you are recovering from the shock and that, hard as it is, people are going back to their business and getting on with life. We have faith that you will not allow the terrorists to break your will or shatter your reason. This makes us confident that together we will be able to defeat this terrible evil.

September 14, 2001

A Coalition for a Better World Order

(The New York Times)

In the past month, the world has witnessed something previously unknown: a common stand taken by America, Russia, Europe, India, China, Cuba, most of the Islamic world and numerous other regions and countries. Despite many serious differences between them, they united to save civilization.

It is now the responsibility of the world community to transform the coalition against terror into a coalition for a new, peaceful and just world order. Let us not, as happened during the 1990's, miss the chance to build such an order.

Concepts like solidarity and helping third world countries to fight poverty and backwardness have disappeared from the political vocabulary. But if these concepts are not revived politically, the worst scenarios of a clash of civilizations could become reality.

I believe the United Nations Security Council should take the lead in fighting terrorism and in dealing with other global problems. All the main issues considered by the United Nations affect mankind's security. It is time to stop reviling the United Nations and get on with the work of adapting it to new tasks.

Concrete steps should include accelerated nuclear and chemical disarmament and control over the remaining stocks of dangerous substances, including chemical and biological agents. No amount of money is too much for that. I hope the United States will support the verification protocol of the convention banning biological weapons and ratify the treaty to prohibit all nuclear tests. Both steps would reverse the Bush administration's current positions.

We should also heed those who have pointed out the negative consequences of globalization for hundreds of millions of people. Globalization cannot be stopped, but it can be made more humane and more balanced for those it affects.

If the battle against terrorism is limited to military operations, the world could be the loser. But if it becomes an integral

part of common efforts to build a more just world order, everyone would win – including those who now do not support American actions or the antiterrorism coalition. Those people, and they are many, should not all be branded as enemies.

Russia has shown its solidarity with America. President Vladimir Putin was the first foreign leader to call President Bush on Sept. 11. Russia has been sharing information, coordinating positions with the West and with its neighbors, opening its airspace, and providing humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people and weapons to the Northern Alliance. This has been good policy. But we should bear in mind that, both in the Russian establishment and among the people, reaction to it has been mixed.

Some people are still prone to old ways of understanding the world and Russia's place in it. Others sincerely wonder whether the world's most powerful country should be bombing impoverished Afghanistan. Still others ask: We have supported America in its hour of need, but will it meet us halfway on issues important to us?

I am sure Russia will be a serious partner in fighting international terrorism. But equally, it is important that its voice be heard in building a new international order. If not, Russians could conclude that they have merely been used. Irritants in US-Russian relations – issues like missile defense and the admission of new members to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization – will be addressed in due course. But they will be easier to solve once we have moved toward a new world agenda and a deeper partnership.

Finally, it would be wrong to use the battle against terrorism in order to establish control over countries or regions. This would discredit the coalition and close off the prospect of transforming it into a mechanism for building a peaceful world. Turning the coalition against terror into an alliance that works to achieve a peaceful and just world order would be a lasting memorial to the thousands of victims of the Sept. 11 tragedy.

October 19, 2001

Transforming Trust Into Trade
(The New York Times)

Not only because of the recent summit in Ljubljana, but from my own discussions with both Vladimir Putin and George W. Bush, I have a new optimism about the future of relations between the United States and Russia. Unlike the hawks in Washington and Moscow who would like to put Russian-American relations on the foreign policy back burner, these two presidents understand the importance of the relationship.

Now, for the first time in years the word "trust" has been heard in our dialogue. The predecessors of Mr. Putin and Mr. Bush shied away from that word out of excessive concern for their domestic political foes. But it was not just the word that fell into disuse; trust itself had begun to erode.

Something else was said at the summit: Russia and the United States are not enemies. Continuing to emphasize this truth is of crucial importance.

So, should we now just rejoice and wait for the new presidents' new style to be translated into concrete deeds? I don't think so. We cannot afford to wait, because we have very little time to make things work – and also because it is only too clear that the words about trust and partnership are already being used by some in the United States as a rhetorical screen, with transparent and pernicious aims.

I am greatly worried by the attempts of some American commentators – in politics and in the press – to hinge the entire Russian-American relationship on two goals: deploying a missile defense system and enlarging the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The subtext is: if, to achieve these goals, we must sometimes talk nice to the Russians, let's do so. The same pundits and politicians are equally blunt about consultations with American allies and partners: we can talk, but in the end we shall do what's good for us.

One would have to be very naïve to think that such a strategy would not be resisted. If this attitude were to become

United States policy, the Start 1 and Start 2 treaties would fall apart. Russia would put multiple warheads on its intercontinental missiles. A new round of the nuclear arms race and of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction would be inevitable.

Instead of jeopardizing global security, we must pursue policies and find solutions that are mutually acceptable. Such solutions cannot be found if security issues, important as they are, are the only item on the Russian-American agenda.

Perhaps the greatest failure during the 1990's was that Russia and the United States did not lay a groundwork for business and trade. Our relations are much the worse for it – in contrast to those between the United States and China, for which economic ties act as a powerful stabilizer.

I am convinced that a breakthrough in Russian-American business relationships is possible in high technology, information and telecommunications, and science-based products. Of course, it is for the private businesses of the two countries to lead the way, but to get things off the ground, governments must act, and not necessarily through bureaucratic structures or commissions. The important thing is that our entrepreneurs should feel support, should see that obstacles are being removed.

Clearly, there must be major changes in the Russian economy: a favorable investment climate, stable and predictable taxation, a genuine effort to fight corruption. A start has been made. What's primarily needed from the United States is a signal from the Bush administration that doing business with Russia is in the national interest of the United States. I understand that, as agreed by the two presidents, a large delegation of American businesspeople will soon be visiting Russia.

In Ljubljana, Mr. Putin and Mr. Bush agreed on a mechanism for consultations on strategic stability. At their next summit, in Genoa, they should agree on how to give an impetus to trade and commerce between the United States and Russia.

June 30, 2001

Take a Page from Kennedy
(TIME)

"The advance of freedom has made this the American century," declared Bill Clinton in a New York City speech this year. "God willing...we will make the 21st century the next American century." Perhaps this was meant mostly for domestic consumption, but I am wondering how the rhetoric rings in the rest of the world. Should America have the guiding role in global development?

Before considering that question, we should look back at another presidential speech, delivered 35 years ago at American University by John F. Kennedy. It was the height of the cold war, a year after the Cuban missile crisis brought the world to the brink of nuclear conflict. Yet Kennedy spoke of peace: "a topic on which ignorance too often abounds and the truth is too rarely perceived." The truth, as he saw it, was that "in an age [of nuclear weapons], total war makes no sense."

But what kind of peace should America seek? This was Kennedy's answer: "Not a Pax Americana enforced on the world by American weapons of war...not merely peace for Americans but peace for all men and women." Peace as "the product of many nations." Kennedy spoke of world law and of strengthening the United Nations, rather than imposing the American system.

This was a new vision of peace. The President proclaimed America's willingness to re-examine its place in a world that had changed dramatically since World War II. He appealed for understanding and a similar attitude on the part of Soviet leaders, hoping that a new American approach would help them abandon prejudice, suspicion and propaganda.

Kennedy's appeal did not meet with the understanding or response that it deserved. Although a partial nuclear-test-ban treaty was soon signed, further progress stalled. The ideology that shaped all Soviet policies assumed an irreconcilable struggle between the two opposing social systems. No one in

Moscow believed that the U.S. President was sincere, and his initiative ended with his assassination later that year.

When I assumed leadership of the Soviet Union in the mid-1980s, I saw the same need that Kennedy felt two decades before – and embarked on a path that we called the new political thinking. President Ronald Reagan responded, though not immediately, to our new approach, and together we began the work of ending the cold war. We both concluded that nuclear war could not be won and must never be fought – exactly what Kennedy had said. His legacy was invisibly present in the work done with Presidents Reagan and Bush, which began the process of nuclear disarmament.

What followed, however, was often disappointing. After the break-up of the Soviet Union, the West could not resist declaring victory in the cold war, and the U.S. saw an opportunity to extend its influence to the former Soviet bloc.

Does that mean that Kennedy's insights and the principles of new political thinking are of little use at the threshold of the 21st century? I don't think so. Even as business and communications have become globalized, we see the rise of national consciousness. Even in the age of the Internet, nations are seeking to safeguard their unique cultural identities.

The world is more complex and problem-ridden than in the 1960s. Many nations that were once backward technologically – including China, India and Brazil – are now influential forces in economics and politics. Amid this diversity and complexity, should the U.S. claim global leadership?

Many dispute that claim sharply. In fact, as globalization has widened the world's wealth gap, poorer countries are blaming the rich, industrialized West for many of their ills.

It was good to hear Clinton, in that New York speech, salute and reaffirm U.S. commitment to the U.N. – particularly after a period of quite chilly relations with the organization. American leadership will be applauded when the U.S. uses its influence to help settle international conflicts, when it takes part in U.N. peacekeeping operations, when it opposes militant nationalism and global terrorism, when it works to pre-

vent the spread of weapons of mass destruction, when it helps less-developed countries and speaks out for human rights.

At times, however, Americans interpret their responsibility in a different way – as giving them a right to decide for others, to impose American institutions and to promote the American way of life as something unrivaled in the past, present and future. This kind of leadership can hardly be a way toward world peace and stability.

I have no intention of admonishing America. I am just saying that the world is, and should remain, a place of great diversity. The global neighborhood will not accept global uniformity. Think of this today, heeding John F. Kennedy's speech of 35 years ago.

August 3, 1998

A President Who Listened

(The New York Times)

I have just sent to Nancy Reagan a letter of condolence for the passing of Ronald Reagan. The 40th president of the United States was an extraordinary man who in his long life saw moments of triumph, who had his ups and downs and experienced the happiness of true love.

It so happened that his second term as president coincided with the emergence of a new Soviet leadership – a coincidence that may seem accidental but that was in effect a prologue to momentous events in world history.

Ronald Reagan's first term as president had been dedicated to restoring America's self-confidence. He appealed to the traditions and optimism of the people, to the American dream, and he regarded as his main task strengthening the economy and the military might of the United States. This was accompanied by confrontational rhetoric toward the Soviet Union, and more than rhetoric – by a number of actions that caused concern both in our country and among many people throughout the world. It seemed that the most important thing about Reagan was his anti-Communism and his reputation as a hawk who saw the Soviet Union as an "evil empire."

Yet his second term as president emphasized a different set of goals. I think he understood that it is the peacemakers, above all, who earn a place in history. This was consistent with his convictions based on experience, intuition and love of life. In this he was supported by Nancy – his wife and friend, whose role will, I am sure, be duly appreciated.

At our first meeting in Geneva in 1985 I represented a new, changing Soviet Union. Of course, the new Soviet leadership could have continued in the old ways. But we chose a different path, because we saw the critical problems of our country and the urgent need to step back from the edge of the abyss to which the nuclear arms race was pushing mankind.

The dialogue that President Reagan and I started was difficult. To reach agreement, particularly on arms control and

security, we had to overcome mistrust and the barriers of numerous problems and prejudices.

I don't know whether we would have been able to agree and to insist on the implementation of our agreements with a different person at the helm of American government. True, Reagan was a man of the right. But, while adhering to his convictions, with which one could agree or disagree, he was not dogmatic; he was looking for negotiations and cooperation. And this was the most important thing to me: he had the trust of the American people.

In the final outcome, our insistence on dialogue proved fully justified. At a White House ceremony in 1987, we signed the intermediate-range nuclear forces treaty, which launched the process of real arms reduction. And, even though we saw the road to a world free of nuclear weapons differently, the very fact of setting this goal in 1986 in Reykjavik helped to break the momentum of the arms race.

While addressing these vital tasks, we changed the nature of relations between our two countries, moving step by step to build trust and to test it by concrete deeds. And in the process, we – and our views – were changing too. I believe it was not an accident that during his visit to Moscow in the summer of 1988 President Reagan said, in reply to a reporter's question, that he did not regard the perestroika-era Soviet Union as an evil empire.

I think that the main lesson of those years is the need for dialogue, which must not be broken off whatever the challenges and complications we have to face. Meeting with Ronald Reagan in subsequent years I saw that this was how he understood our legacy to the new generation of political leaders.

The personal rapport that emerged between us over the years helped me to appreciate Ronald Reagan's human qualities. A true leader, a man of his word and an optimist, he traveled the journey of his life with dignity and faced courageously the cruel disease that darkened his final years. He has earned a place in history and in people's hearts.

July 6, 2004

What Made Me a Crusader
(TIME)

I'm often asked why I lead the International Green Cross. And the first question is always about the 1986 nuclear accident at Chernobyl: was that disaster the defining moment for my concern about ecological issues?

Chernobyl did have a tremendous impact on my thinking about the environment and nuclear weapons. But my understanding of the importance of the natural environment came much earlier. I am of peasant stock, and as a young man I worked on a collective farm in Stavropol. A large part of my life was spent on the land. I saw the effects of such problems as soil erosion, the spread of the deserts, and air and water pollution. I saw that man's intrusions in nature were often imprudent and harmful to man himself. Acting as the master and even king of nature, man gave no thought to the consequences. But the consequences came without fail – at once or a little later.

When I came to Moscow in the late 1970s, I learned even more. As a secretary of the Central Committee and member of the Supreme Soviet working for the natural resources commission, I saw how hasty construction and wasteful operation of huge irrigation systems blighted the Central Asian region, destroying the Aral Sea and depleting the rivers Syr Darya and Amu Darya. In Russia, hydroelectric projects built with little thought for their consequences flooded millions of hectares of fertile land. A similarly careless approach to locating industrial projects jeopardized Lake Baikal, the world's largest body of freshwater.

Alas, man does not always learn from his mistakes. I was involved in the debate over redirecting the waters of Russia's northern rivers to the south.

Our reform policies – perestroika – gave scientists and activists a chance to challenge this project and show that it would not work. That put a stop to it.

And then came the thunder of Chernobyl. During that accident's first days, many scientists – even some respected

ones – argued that it was "no big deal," that we would get by. From day one, however, it was our policy to get to the bottom of it. We decided that people must know the truth. The power of the atom had gone out of control, and it took the nation's supreme effort to cope with it. It was a watershed in our understanding of many things.

The new era of glasnost and free speech brought people's concerns out into the open. Protests led to the emergence of a grass-roots environmental movement, which made us review a number of decisions taken previously – not just on constructing new nuclear power plants but also on other projects that threatened the environment. In the late 1980s, the reformist government agreed to close hundreds of industrial facilities, despite the impact on the economy. When I came to the United Nations in October 1988, I brought a package of environmental initiatives. One of them called for creating a global non-governmental organization to help save the environment. Named the International Green Cross, at my suggestion, it is based near Geneva and has affiliates in dozens of countries. Our main goal is to help set in motion a value shift in people's minds. Our environmental education programs, in cooperation with the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and several governments, aim at helping people understand a simple truth: man is not the master of nature but just a part of it. After all, the environment has existed for billions of years without man and could, in extremis, do so again. So this is the challenge: we need environmentally sustainable development if new generations are to succeed us on earth.

Modern civilization has given decent living standards to people in advanced Western nations. But how do we assure economic well-being and human dignity for the rest of mankind without ruining the environment? This problem has no purely technological solution. A political and moral choice will have to be made.

Green Cross organizations are developing specific programs of "environmental healing." Among the most important is Legacy, an educational project that addresses the

environmental consequences of the cold war, including the discharge of toxic wastes by military bases and the stockpiling of chemical weapons. Another research initiative concerns a problem at the intersections of ecology, economy and politics: the issue of fresh water. We recently brought to Geneva a group of water experts, many of whom predicted that this diminishing resource may ignite some of the next century's most dangerous conflicts.

The Green Cross is off to a good start, but the more I think about it, the more I realize that we are just at the beginning of the road. Last March I attended a conference in Rio de Janeiro that took stock of what has happened in the five years since the Earth Summit. There is very little to cheer. Governments are in no hurry to implement even the modest pledges made in 1992, even though the time we have to transform our way of living is quickly shrinking. Still, I remain an optimist. I reject defeatism and frustration. But I also reject the view that things will somehow work themselves out. I am convinced that mankind can meet the environmental challenge if all of us join this cause, if all of us act.

Nature Will Not Wait

(Green Cross International)

The fall of the Berlin Wall and the political storm that swept across the world a little over a decade ago was above all else a testament to the power of the human spirit to tackle adversity. The Cold War had posed a threat to security, liberty and development everywhere, creating a seemingly insurmountable barrier between the peoples of the planet. Yet, the right mixture of human vision and courageous leadership brought this dark period in our history to a peaceful end. Today we are faced with another threat, already the cause of great suffering for millions: the degradation of the environment. To meet this global challenge we again need a clear and unified vision, determination and decisive leadership.

The impact and forecasts of global warming are worsening; desertification is advancing; deforestation and pollution are endangering our ecosystems; and more than 1.2 billion people do not have access to clean drinking water. We have seen environmental disasters with untold destruction of both human lives and nature: in the short term, during the past months there have been devastating floods across much of Europe and South Asia and the wreck of tankers off the natural treasures of the Galapagos Islands and Australian barrier reef; in the long term, vast areas of the Earth have been irrevocably scarred by the loss of ancient forests, mismanagement of river basins and contamination.

Many environmental experts warn these trends are now far too advanced for us to achieve real sustainability by means of gradual change; they believe we have 30 to 40 years in which to act. Time is short and we are already lagging behind.

While there are an increasing number of bold initiatives led by government and corporate leaders to protect the environment, I do not see emerging the leadership and willingness to take risks at the scale we need to confront the current situation. While there are an increasing number of people

and organizations dedicated to raising awareness and provoking change in the way we treat nature, I do not yet see the clear vision and united front which will inspire humankind to respond in time to correct our course.

The example of the failure of leadership at the climate change talks in The Hague last November are disturbing. This failure lies at the hands of our political leaders, particularly the United States which has not yet even ratified the treaty, and, to a lesser extent, the business community which has increasing influence over government policies. Another worrying example of how we are going about things the wrong way is the increasingly closed nature of the annual World Economic Forum in Davos – isolating delegates and pushing other interest groups further from the mainstream. In The Hague and in Davos we saw divisions into camps: North versus South, and pro- versus anti-"globalizationists".

This is a very grave situation. It is critical that we find a way to bring about rapid, sweeping change of human consciousness and actions worldwide – something that enables us to provoke a large-scale shift of course in a very short time. This cannot be achieved if we remain divided.

The end of the Cold War offers an example of people-powered change that positively altered the course of history. We need a similar shift – a fundamental shift in values – to ensure that we do not miss this window of opportunity to save our beautiful planet, and ourselves. First among the threats we must face are those posed by nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, the freshwater crisis, and the impact of climate change.

A new way of thinking, a new world order that is based more on justice and equality and less on profits is needed. We thought the fall of the Berlin Wall would usher this in, but instead a more complicated world has resulted and, more worrying still, we are now even seeing signs of a resurgence in militarization.

What can be done? What kind of leadership do we need? I consider 5 points to be vital in this respect:

1. Reform the UN system in order to give more power for actions and the enforcement of UN decisions for peace and stability;

2. International Agreements, Conventions and Protocols relevant to disarmament, climate change, biodiversity, desertification, international watercourses, and others should be ratified without delay, and implemented with courage and determination.

3. Environmental objectives should be integrated from the beginning into development planning and any form of economic activity;

4. Political leaders – and businesses – should acknowledge and act on their responsibility to turn rhetoric into action and achieve environmental compliance;

5. Reverse the decline of international development, allowing developing nations to reduce their crippling debt, cover basic human needs, and access technologies to use materials and energy efficiently, with a minimum of waste.

If nothing is done to achieve sustainability in the first part of this new century, the prospects for humankind's survival will diminish. Still, if I thought it were hopeless, I would not join you in the environmental movement as President of Green Cross International.

Nature is giving us all the signs we need to develop a common vision for the future; we must grasp this message and act now. Governments, individuals and business – Let us move together, with bold leadership, to solve the environmental crisis. Nature will not wait.

Why the Poor Are Still With Us

(Global Agenda)

Poverty is a political problem, says Mikhail Gorbachev. There will be no development until we face up to its true causes – in Russia as much as in the developing world.

The new century has already provided much proof that – although we have entered a new, global era – we still live by old habits and outdated methods. The wave of hope that swept the world when we ended the Cold War has been replaced for many by disenchantment and despair. Global security and environmental crisis are both pressing problems of our age, yet poverty is also one of the defining challenges of this century.

The 1990s were marked by a hope that the challenge of poverty reduction would somehow resolve itself through the curative powers of the so-called Washington Consensus – the set of free market proposals imposed on developing economies by international financial institutions.

The business community in general, and especially transnational corporations, strongly backed this approach, presumably with profit margins in mind. But such a one-sided approach never leads to much good: applying such a largely theoretical system has brought problems, primarily to the developing world, though also to the developed world.

This is part of the reason why the opportunities which arose at the end of the Cold War have been largely squandered. It has become clear that a new approach is needed.

Unfulfilled promises

World leaders took an important step at the UN Millennium Summit in 2000, by expressing their political will to address the problem of poverty and by adopting specific measures to fight this scourge. Four years later, however, the goals set at that summit are little more than pious wishes for hundreds of millions of people throughout the world, particularly in Africa.

The promises of increased development assistance, fair trade, improved market access and an easing of the debt burden of developing countries are not being kept. Concerned by this, Kofi Annan, the UN secretary general, has proposed to hold a conference this year to review the situation at the highest level, in the hope that we will finally begin to make progress.

Yet it is clear to me that the efforts of politicians alone will not be enough to respond to the challenges that we face. What we need is the interaction of politics, business and civil society.

We addressed the problem of poverty at the 2004 annual assembly of the World Political Forum in Stresa, Italy. Our main conclusion was that poverty is, above all, a political problem. Today, when the world has enough resources and some proven and effective ways of fighting poverty, failure to solve this problem stems primarily from lack of political will. Instead of fulfilling their commitments, the leading powers seem to be more interested in looking for a panacea.

Today, free trade and good governance are seen as a kind of magic formula. There is no doubt that both are important, as are prudent economic policies and respect for the laws of market economics. However, the emphasis on these indisputable truths seems too often to be no more than a pretext to shirk obligations, such as allocating 0.7% of GDP for development assistance (as agreed in principle by all OECD countries), while at the same time finding billions of dollars for major military operations and new weapons systems.

Poverty is also a political problem because, unless it is addressed, we will face a new division of the world, the consequences of which will be even more dangerous than those of the divisions we overcame by ending the East-West confrontation. Dividing the world into islands of prosperity and vast areas of poverty and despair is more dangerous than the Cold War because the two regions cannot be fenced off from each other. Despair creates fertile ground for extremism and terrorism, to say nothing of migration flows, epidemics and new hotbeds of instability.

Finally, poverty is a political problem because it cannot be separated from the problems of democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms. Democracy and development are by no means incompatible. But where the problems of poverty remain without solution for decades, people become willing to sacrifice democracy in favour of authoritarian-style politicians. This is what largely caused the rollback of the democratic wave that changed the world in the 1980s and early 1990s.

I am convinced that democracy cannot be imposed by tanks or pre-emptive strikes. In every nation it should be the result of its own evolution. Yet, more favorable prerequisites can be created for democracy: ending poverty is the essential condition.

Poverty is not just a third-world problem. The paradox of globalization as a blind process is that the gap between rich and poor has grown both among countries and within them, including those that are seemingly most prosperous. At the same time, we have seen the erosion of the middle class, rightly seen as the pillar of democracy.

A challenge for Putin

Unfortunately, Russia too has been affected by these processes, though its resources and possibilities should allow it to provide at least decent living conditions for all its citizens. Instead, the failure of the economic reforms of the 1990s has put two-thirds of Russia's population at or below the poverty line.

President Vladimir Putin singled out this problem from his first days in office. During his first presidential term Mr Putin had to turn his attention primarily to overcoming the political and economic chaos that he inherited from his predecessor. Not all of his actions were beyond dispute, but the dangers of social explosion and the country's disintegration, which were real, have now been averted. Therefore new tasks have to be put on the agenda.

I would be disappointed if Mr Putin's second presidential term were to focus on further consolidating power, while

letting the opportunity for a breakthrough in the country's development slip away. Our society is ready to forge ahead. I feel that the business community is ready too, for it understands that one cannot hope for sustained success in a poor country with a purely resource-based economy.

The challenges the world is facing today are daunting, but we should not panic. History is not preordained: it always leaves room for choices. A different world, and a more stable and secure world order are possible. Politics, business and civil society should work together to find a path toward that goal.

January 2005

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Transcript of Gorbachev's Interview with Brian Lamb
(PBS Booknotes)

BRIAN LAMB: Mikhail Gorbachev, why did you write this book [Memoirs]?

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV (through translator): Everyone is writing books. I sometimes wrote – read books about perestroika and saw my name in those books, but the rest was totally false, stupid, silly, a lot of rumors, a lot of speculation. Some other books are quite serious, of course. I don't want to overdramatize it but anyway, I thought that I am the principal witness and the principal person who bears responsibility for what happened, and I believed that it was important for me to explain my position about how I started reforms, why I came around to the view that reforms were necessary; why did I decide and how that decision emerged about reforms and how difficult the process was.

So I thought that it is important to write a book about the time of perestroika because perestroika had far reaching consequences for my country and for the world. I cannot accept it when people speak but Gorbachev is silent. I had to speak out and I did that and I tried to avoid the temptation of the writers of many memoirs to prettify myself, to show myself in better light. I tried to keep within the facts. I have a lot of facts about various events, about all that happened and

about my relationship with various people in domestic and international politics. I could say a lot. I tried to write about the most important things. At first I dictated 10,000 pages of material. Here, this book is equivalent to 1,000 pages of typewritten text.

LAMB: I notice that the German company Bertelsmann bought this book and now it's published in the United States and – Doubleday. And that one of the first countries you ever went to in your life, in 1966, was Germany and Berlin and you said it was an emotional experience for you. Why is that?

GORBACHEV: Well, for us, relations that we have had with Germany after the war bore the imprint of what happened in the past, the war for which Nazism was responsible, the bloodshed, the bloodbath in which our country and your country, too, was involved. Twenty seven million Russians and people of other nationalities of the former Soviet Union died in the war or in the camps or were killed in bombings, etc. That, given the fact that the gene pool of our country, whole generations were killed – for example, males born in 1922, '23 – only a few of them survived. So the war was an extremely painful experience and therefore building relations with Germany after such a tragedy – this is something that all of us had to do a lot of thinking about, we and the Germans, and a lot had to change in our country and in Germany. And when I visited, even the German Democratic Republic, the country that was our ally at that time, as a Russian, you know, my heart began to beat faster. There was that building of Reichstag, the burnt building of Reichstag. We saw that mound of earth over the Chancellory, the Brandenburg Gate, where there were those goose stepping soldiers – there used to be those goose stepping soldiers.

And I remembered the war. I was 10 years old when the war started and the memory of a child remembers all

that, imprints all that. I remembered how the war started on a Sunday. Everyone was planning to go out and to have fun. The grownups had their own fun. We kids had our children's fun and then suddenly stopped. All of us were gathered together in the center of our village, the village of Privolnoye, which is my birthplace, and we listened. There was no radio at home at that time so we were listening from the loudspeaker – a special loudspeaker that broadcast the speech of Molotov. That is how it began. And then we had very difficult years. So the war was a shocking experience, an upheaval, and it was difficult to get over that experience with Germany, even though in the history of our relations there's a lot of periods of cooperation and of positive interaction. But building a new relationship, a partnership of cooperation – that was a difficult process. And when I went there, I really, you know, watched all of it through a special perspective.

I tried to understand and I remembered a lot. Nevertheless, we saw that Germans are people like us, that they, too, even then, understood the kind of tragedy that Nazism was for them and for the world, based on those delirious ideas of race superiority, exclusivity, etc. So emotionally it was a difficult experience. Politically, of course, it was, at that time, quite clear that things had changed. But emotionally that is difficult because other than our head, we have our heart.

LAMB: By the way, a couple of years ago when Richard Nixon was here for our book program like this, I asked him what his favorite town in the world was – or city and he said it was Istanbul in Turkey. How about yours? What's your favorite city in the world?

GORBACHEV: Well, I would not want to do it this way. I really do not want to give all the praise to one city. I visited many cities. I've traveled throughout the world. I love Moscow, even though there were some years of neglect in

Moscow and some buildings in Moscow are very simplistic, this kind of prefab construction. Today, Moscow, particularly its center, the historic part of Moscow, is being rebuilt. It is rising again and this is wonderful. I welcome this. It is a lot of joy to walk the streets of Moscow, the narrow lanes of Moscow. Those were the years of – when I was a student I first came to Moscow – I met Raisa in Moscow.

Overall, in my life, I lived a quarter of a century in Moscow. Both my granddaughters were born in Moscow. So Moscow University, my young years, are connected with Moscow. On the other hand, St. Petersburg is also a wonderful city – Kiev, Odessa, I have also visited many of your wonderful cities, really beautiful cities, big and small – San Francisco. Or I thought that, you know, Vancouver, the Canadian city of Vancouver, I thought that it was a town, but when I came I saw it was a city. It was a marvelous city with beautiful bays, with a nature that is similar to ours. And I could go on and on. I could speak about many wonderful cities that I visited, including Istanbul. Yes, I visited that city, too.

LAMB: You ...

GORBACHEV: Perhaps sometimes the person – the individual associates a city with some event, with some experience. On the other hand, there are such wonderful cities, like Paris, for example, or as I write in my memoirs, you walk the streets in that city and you walk the streets of Rome and you feel as though you are a part of history. Florence, when you look at that city from the hill and you feel the music of those tile roofs and it's a wonderful, light city, a city of flowers and music. So I would not single out one city and give all the praise, all the laurels to one city. That would be unfair. It is good there are many wonderful cities. It is the diversity that we have to protect, we have to preserve.

It would be terrible if someone tried – it would be stupid if someone tried, once again, to steamroll the world to equalize everything into one model of society. We tried to force a Communist model of society on the people and tried to make people happy in this kind of barracks. Or, if someone tried to Westernize the entire world, that would be equally stupid. We must see the world as a diverse world with very different nations, very different histories, cultures. Now we have an opportunity after the end of the Cold War to build a very diverse world with all that multiplicity.

Even though there are still dangers after the end of the Cold War, I hope that we will avoid the new division of the world. I hope we'll take advantage of the opportunities because this is why we did what we did in working together with your country in overcoming, surmounting the barriers, the terrible barriers that we had to overcome; not only those mountains of weapons, but there were the mountains of lies about each other that we had to set aside – the stereotypes. When people met, then they saw that all of us are the same in that we want to live, we want to enjoy life, and I'm very glad I recently – on this visit, I have been to eight states of the United States and I had some very private meetings and I once talked to 20,000 people – to a group of 20,000 people and there was enormous interest, many questions. People are very open minded, and they applaud the fact that they can now breathe after this sword of Damocles – the nuclear sword of Damocles had been averted. But people, again, are also worried because we see some kind of players – you know, you started on this question, but, of course, I went on to contemporary politics. Of course, my book is more about past events. But you cannot divide the past and the present.

LAMB: You just told us earlier that you dictated some 10,000 pages of material. When did you start dictating? And then how did you put the book together? There's a

preface in here by Martin McCauleu from the University of London. What role did he play in putting the book together?

GORBACHEV: No. No. He only participated in the editing of the English edition, trying to make the book more concise, so some ideas about the structure of the book. But the book is mine. All this book was done by me. Many people helped me because it takes a lot of work to complete this book, but the main burden of the work was mine and I had to decide eventually about what kind of book it's going to be, what will be left out of the initial 10,000 pages, what will be left in the German edition, what will be in the English edition, and finally, this English edition was born after a good and friendly cooperation, but sometimes we had a lot of debate – a lot of sharp debate because those people who know publishing – they said that I should produce a more concise edition for English and American readers. I eventually agreed, but I disagreed with some other suggestions. I am a democratically minded person, but eventually the decisions I take myself. It's my decision.

LAMB: Before we started you said that the gentleman doing the translation for both of us, Pavel, helped you on the book. I want to show the audience what he looks like and they'll remember him. They can see it on the screen right there. He's there on the monitor. And he is now translating my English to your Russian and then when you speak, he translates your Russian to my English. Do you think that when you have a translator, which we all need when – most of the time when language is – does that cut down on the ability to communicate as well as we should?

GORBACHEV: Well, what can we do? I don't want us all to speak one language. I don't want us to abandon all the other languages. I cannot agree with having in the world some kind of superculture and all the other cultures to be subordinate

to it. That would be very dangerous. We want a united world and the world is globalizing. The world is getting smaller. We, today, see things in real time because of the communications media, television, etc., etc.

But we should preserve the diversity and the multiplicity that exists in the world. In nature it's very important, but similarly in the human world, in the world of nations, people should meet, people should work together. That's a source of great happiness, of course, and diversity, too, should be preserved. It should not be the kind of Communist barracks which some people wanted to create because barracks is still a prison, a big prison. And prison – one feels bad in prison always. And therefore, we should preserve languages and there should be translation, therefore. I am sorry that, at a time when we didn't have enough time during the war and later to study languages, I studied German a little bit, but because of lack of time, I didn't have a chance to learn any of the foreign languages.

And I regret that because translation can constrain you. Translation can constrain because I tried to elaborate. I am a temperamental person, I come from the South, and then I have to stop and listen to the translation. And the translator has to keep pace with me. When one speaks to a person and looks that person in his eyes, I prefer that. So I'm sorry that I don't know foreign languages that my generation – many people didn't have a chance to learn those languages. But I would say that Pavel, my translator – I would like to say to the others what I said to you. He worked for many years as a diplomat in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He spent a few years working with Mr. Shevardnadze, the foreign minister. He had worked before that as interpreter in the UN secretariat in New York, the city that he loves very much and he is saying that this is the best city in America. And then when I became general secretary and then president, all my contacts over the past 10 years, including after I stepped down, have been through him and I value very much his wide range in knowledge because I have to discuss things

that are very complex – political and philosophical things that are quite complex, and, therefore, I need a person who's not just an interpreter, but a person who has wide ranging knowledge in the various subjects. And he is that kind of person. And he is also a person who can work very, very hard. It's amazing.

LAMB: When we watched you, when you were the leader of the Soviet Union, we always wanted to know if you understood any English and whether or not in the meetings you could understand President Reagan or President Bush at all. Do you understand English?

GORBACHEV: To some extent, yes. When one meets with people often and when you talk about things and being translated, you begin to learn. It's a kind of teaching process and at some point I began to feel that I'm beginning to understand the point, the main content. Of course, not those matters that require great precision where positions are being laid out. That requires very precise translation and precision in translation; really defines the consequences, the implications – political consequences. But in terms of human give and take, yes, at some point, I started to understand certain things, to get certain phrases and words. We were driving here in the car in New York and I asked my colleague, who accompanies me, Dr. Likhotal, who knows English quite well, and I was reading various signs and I tried to translate or understand some of those signs. And then I said, "You know, I already know quite a few English words," and the difficulty is that it's not like in Russian or in German you can read easily.

But in English sometimes you write Liverpool, but you should read Boston. But I can already read some and understand some and I said, "I have quite a few English words already." And he said, "Well, the next phase, of course, is to connect all those words." Yes, to connect is more difficult. It's probably too late to start. But I have an interest in lan-

guages. For example, in Germany, since I studied German when I was younger and even read German, unfortunately later I had no chance for 20, 25 years to use the language, but in Germany when I go there, the next day – two, three days afterwards I begin to understand a lot and to speak a little. So it's that way.

LAMB: You mentioned Raisa, your wife, Mrs. Gorbachev, earlier, and you mention in the book that it took her two years to recover her health after the coup. I want to ask you – how is she today? And what is she doing today?

GORBACHEV: Well, it is true that probably I am more solid physically and in terms of my nervous system. Men, unlike women, are different. Friedrich Engels said that women are a different civilization. They are more sensitive and to me, to a person who was steeped in politics – I spent 40 years in politics – that's a real ordeal – and not all can go through this. I was able to endure. I was able to avoid panic. I never panicked in any situation. Whatever the danger, I always tried to concentrate and to think about a solution to any problem. As for her and our daughter, she took our isolation during the coup very hard and that affected her health and her strength. And it took her two years, indeed, to recover, to start traveling with me, and she does. I want her to be with me because she is the person who is probably the most important person in my life. She gives me a lot of support and, of course, those who say that she took decisions for me – that, of course, is not true. She was far from politics. But she is a very educated person and it so happens that we have always been together and supported each other. We are close, not only personally intimate but we are also friends intellectually. This is the way it was and is.

Today she is working on some charitable programs within the Gorbachev Foundation because today the situation in Russia is difficult and people from other countries try to help and we appreciate this. Of course, what Russia needs most is

not so much charity but cooperation based on ground rules, based on real partnership. But there are some people in Russia who have been hard hit by the current situation – the recent situation. And the humanitarian charitable assistance that we receive is only to be welcomed. I really believe that this is something that the American people can do very well. And I appreciate it very much. I like this very much. I think that without this feature of the American character, which I think is very spiritual, without this a nation cannot really work.

And in America, this works very much. And the fact that people here came from different places, different continents and they understood that they should, of course, take the initiative but they also should help each other. And that, I think, created this morality of mutual help – initiative on the one hand, but solidarity on the other hand toward those who cannot make it. So this is what she's doing, and right now she is working actively with the patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church and they are working hard to make sure that the assistance that we receive from other countries really goes to those who are in need. We found that initially some people whose hands are not clean tried to do business, to make a profit from this charitable assistance and they actually sold at a profit some humanitarian shipments.

And, therefore, my foundation, even though mostly it is a think tank and it is a research center on political science and international relations, we also have a special group within the Gorbachev Foundation that helps those who'd like to give this kind of assistance. And we cannot do everything, but we're working together with a number of humanitarian organizations because they trust us, because they know that people who work with Gorbachev are good and decent people, people with a good conscience, people who were with me through thick and thin. So Raisa is doing this, too.

LAMB: You say that your hobby – both of your hobbies early in your life was reading, and I'd be interested

in knowing what kind of books you read [...] in your early years [...] in your library. And you even said that your daughter, Irina, read almost all the books, all the Russian classics and all in your library. What kind of books did you read early?

GORBACHEV: First of all, you ought to know that this is really our great hobby and, because of this, we have an enormous library. We have been buying books all our life. We have in our library a lot of fiction, a lot of books about history and philosophy, because Raisa had a PhD in philosophy, a lot of material of a reference kind. So my library is of great help to me. It helps me out in difficult situations. We have the Encyclopaedia Britannica and we use it because our daughter speaks English and Raisa can read a little English, so we use that as a source. So we do have a big library. My hobby particularly is Russian fiction, but also European and American classics.

I have read many of the books by your writers – Theodore Dreiser, Scott Fitzgerald, to say nothing of Mark Twain and Jack London – and I could go on and on. And I read them; I read more than one book by each author. If I started reading Jack London, I wanted to read all that he wrote. I also like European fiction. I read many books by European authors, fewer books by Asian authors. I would say I read some books on Eastern history and philosophy. I like books on history. I like historical fiction, memoirs. I have a lot of books, a lot of memoirs; read them all, and I sometimes go back to those books. Recently, for example, I started to reread Dostoyevsky, particularly "The Possessed," "The Karamazov Brothers." And there's a lot there that's extremely instructive. I am amazed at the magnitude of that writer, and he was able to render human sufferings and he really was on a quest to study the human soul.

And I think he is probably the best on that score. Tolstoy, Chekhov, too, are great writers; it's amazing what they can do. And I continue to read a great deal. We used to be

a closed society ideologically – very closed, controlled society. And that meant that even well educated people did not get a chance to read some of the – many of the books of Russian philosophers because the Communist Party of the Soviet Union did not like it because our ideologues did not like those philosophers. But when we began perestroika, we very quickly published 30 volumes of all the philosophers of pre – revolutionary Russia. And I have those 30 volumes, and I read a lot by them.

They were great minds: Ilyin, Solovyov, Berdiayev. They said a great deal of what today we are only rehashing. So sometimes we are reinventing the wheel. That is our problem. We reinvent the wheel. We sometimes think as though there were no thinkers before us, and that can be tragic. We really have to go back to those thinkers and writers. It's very important that whatever we say about TV – it's important, of course, but books should not be replaced by anything, by TV or something, because the books make it possible to think more deeply. Probably American audiences will say, "Well, Gorbachev knows that we're reading less than we used to."

Well, I know that in all countries people are spending more time watching TV than reading. But still, I think that books will continue to exist. There will be books. Television has a role, of course. Television has a role in terms of, you know, allowing people to spend time at leisure. But in terms of formative work for the individual, it's very important to read books.

And I read also detective stories, crime stories. I like them. James Hedley Chase, George Simenon and some other writers, Agatha Christie. So I'm quite curious.

LAMB: You mention that perestroika might have started for you in an event in which a well known American attended – a couple of them – Arthur Miller, Peter Ustinov and Alvin Toffler, and there were others that you listed, but those are the three that our audience would recognize the most. What was that event? Because Alvin Toffler has often been men-

tioned in this country by the speaker of our House of Representatives, Newt Gingrich, as one of the people that he has followed, his idea. […] What happened at that meeting that led to some perestroika?

GORBACHEV: Well, that was a meeting of people who are very respectable, very credible. And we had people also from our country there; for example, the famous writer Chingiz Aitmatov and other people. Also, Federico Mayor, who is now the head of UNESCO. We had a number of people from Italy representing Italian culture. We had also Alexander King from the Club of Rome. We had some Asian thinkers – people with a very broad vision. I don't remember all of those names, but it is true Chingiz Aitmatov, who is my friend, asked me to meet with those people, and he said, "Well, it will be just a brief meeting."

But we spent several hours together in my Kremlin office. It was a fascinating conversation for all of us. And during that meeting, when I was listening to them and when I also became involved in that discussion, I saw that we were thinking about the same things. We said that we had already entered upon a new world that we should understand that it's a very different world, that it's a world where we are threatened by nuclear weapons and also by environmental deterioration. We live in a world where the economy is globalizing, in an information age, and so we are, more than ever before, in one boat together. Of course, nations have their own interests, but those interests cannot be realized – they cannot be realized properly if you don't understand that the world has changed.

And therefore, the universal values become more important. They gain priority over the national interests. And it was then that I said that the values common to all of mankind is something that we need to emphasize, is something that should be our guidepost, our lodestar, in building our philosophy and building our policy and in preparing our action. At that time, to say so meant that the general

secretary was saying something that was very unorthodox, unconventional. But they transcribed our talk and they published what I said. And in the Soviet Union, the thinking people, particularly those who were associated with the Marxist philosophy and ideology – people were shocked. Some were mildly shocked and others were very shocked. They said, "Well, this General Secretary Gorbachev is saying things that are heresy."

And I used this, as I sometimes did; I used Lenin, because I read a lot of Lenin and I felt that sometimes he was right, but sometimes he violated the truth because of political and ideological considerations. I read Lenin in a new way, not in the way I read him when I was a student. I was general secretary. I was in Lenin's shoes, in a way. And I used one of the quotations from Lenin. Lenin said one day that the proletariat sometimes must subordinate its interest to the interests of the nation as a whole. And that reference to Lenin made it possible to smooth the reaction. But people said, "Well, he's saying something incredible. This general secretary is saying something unbelievable."

But what was at that time incredible to many of us, of course, had already been said by Einstein. Einstein said that nuclear weapons changed everything but, unfortunately the human mind had not changed. "Our thinking," he said, "has not changed, even though the survival of mankind is at stake." And therefore, I think that Alvin Toffler is right in many of his writings. I recently read the translation of "The Third Wave" by him and his wife, and Speaker Gingrich wrote a preface to that book. And it's extremely interesting, because they speak about the human civilization, which is entering a new phase of its development. And we must find a way to adjust to it. We cannot stop the process of the evolution of our civilization.

If we do not adjust, if we do not understand both the positive aspects and the dangers, if we do not change our behavior, our action, that could be very dangerous. We should understand how civilization is evolving. If we do so, then we

will be able to take advantage of the positive aspects and to limit the negative aspects of those changes. I think he provides very interesting illustrations to that and I agree with him. In America, I think it's wonderful that many books have been published that are extremely interesting. For example, some economists have published books that question the entire paradigm of the development of laissez faire society, laissez faire economics.

Those are people who really think freely. They are free thinkers. They're not like cowboys. I don't want, of course, to offend cowboys. I like cowboys. But what I mean is that they are not cowboys, but they are putting things very starkly. And I am thinking also not only of Alvin Toffler but of others. So my feeling is, we should not put spokes in the wheel of the development of civilization. And we decided that one day, people who had met then, including Peter Ustinov and some others, that we will meet again. This year, we wanted to meet, but we were not able to. But we will definitely meet with some of them.

That conference was called Issyk Kul Forum because that conference of intellectuals was held near Lake Issyk Kul in Kyrgyzstan. So we'd like to have Issyk Kul II. And the president of Kyrgyzstan has already invited us to come and to talk, to have another discussion. But we want to prepare, to prepare well. We want this discussion to culminate in some kind of paper, of an appeal to mankind by people who, it so happens, are particularly sensitive to what is happening and who will be able to speak out and to say something important to mankind.

LAMB: I don't know whether you can answer this or not, but you've been in the United States a lot and you've observed our political system. If you lived in this country, do you have any idea if you would be a Democrat or a Republican?

GORBACHEV: Well – my God – you first have to sort out whether there is a real difference between the two parties.

Frankly, I see no big difference between them. Perhaps now some difference is emerging, perhaps. I think that I am a democratic person. My nature is democratic. My experience of working and interacting with the Americans was working with two Republican presidents, and I must say that we were able to work together, to cooperate. We were able to go very far. And I will not recount all of that; you know very well that my opinion of President Reagan is very high, even though he is a Republican traditionalist, perhaps I can say, and he represents the Republican Party right wing. But it was this president, President Reagan, who really, I think, understood that he had to do something and even to buck the trend. And therefore, I can only say that I am committed to democracy, and within the old system that we had when I was in politics, this is something that people recognized.

I had this fame. Well, it's not a question of fame, but I was recognized as a person whose style and whose thinking are democratic from the start; from my very young years, I was like this. So maybe that's my nature. I come from a peasant family. I come from the soil. From my young years, I saw a great deal; I've worked a great a deal. I know what it is to earn one's bread, to earn one's salary. I know what it is to build a home; for a peasant, it's not simple. And I must say, I had a talk with Tom Brokaw here and we talked about land, because he comes from the heartland, from South Dakota. He worked on the combine, on the harvesting combine. And we started to, you know, discuss this and talked about our memories. And I said that I don't forget where I come from. To me, this is the most important moral test, and I have never forgotten that I come from working people, from simple people.

And you know Speaker O'Neill? I recently heard from a friend of Speaker O'Neill, whom you probably know. He was a very colorful politician who was one of the first American visitors whom I saw in Moscow when I became general secretary. His friends told me that Speaker O'Neill, when he

spoke about people, he said, "I have a very important test. This man has not forgotten where he comes from. When a person doesn't forget where he comes from, that's very important." And from that standpoint, I can say I don't forget where I come from, and that probably is the foundation of my democratic spirit.

What I did, what Raisa did – we come from working families – we took advantage of the opportunities that existed in the Soviet period for such people; we were able to take advantage, and this is our life, despite all of the tribulations and problems inherent in that Soviet system. You know, you cannot just say, "Well, it was a bad system and, therefore people could do nothing and what people could do didn't matter." No. The first thing is that you have a life.

You have a life and you have to live this life. You have to continue the human race. And this is what people do, even in the most difficult conditions, in the most difficult situations, under the most harsh regimes. And we had a very harsh regime. So the lessons of those generations that lived under that old regime and that developed the country, that industrialized the country under that whole regime, that created our science, our education system, that created opportunities and access to education for all, despite the incomes and status of those people, this is something that you cannot negate. You cannot throw out one word from a song, and you cannot negate what actually happened.

But, by the way, that old system, by giving people those opportunities, created the prerequisites and the forces that eventually buried that system because we, the better educated people, people of my generation and people of the generations that followed, we had education, we had knowledge, but we could not realize our potential. The system was really fettering our potential. So the system in that way created preconditions for its own demise. And that is because it was in conflict with the culture and with the education and with the intellect of the people.

LAMB: Has there ever been a time in history – in Russian history that a former top leader like you has ever been able to write a book and travel the world and talk about their life when they were leader?

GORBACHEV: No.

LAMB: No? Never in history?

GORBACHEV: Nikita Khrushchev was under house arrest, and he wrote his memoirs in secret and he was not able to publish them in the Soviet Union. And, of course, he was not able to leave the country or even to leave Moscow. And I once joked that it is known that 128 groups of mountain climbers climbed Mount Everest; one third died. But 40 percent of those who died died during descent. I mounted and climbed Mount Everest, and then I descended from Mount Everest politically and I am still active. And in that sense, this too is a kind of a revolution that is associated with Mikhail Gorbachev. Many people in Russia say that while Gorbachev is in Russia, while Gorbachev is there despite all the problems that are being created for him, despite the information blackout to which he is subjected, if he is still here, if he is not leaving Russia, this is very important for all of us. This is an important reference point. So when people ask me, "Would you like to move, to go to live abroad? Why involve yourself in the struggles, in proving again to those reactionaries or to the current authorities, to the rulers of Russia, who I don't think – who they say don't deserve you, why do that? Go abroad." No. I don't do that. Of course, I travel abroad, but I live in Russia. This is my country. This is my land. This is my fate. I will not go anywhere because this is my moral principle.

Last year, I buried my mother. She died when she was with us in Moscow. We were providing treatment for her. She was 84 years old. But despite all the problems and difficulties of our life now, I did my best. And then when she

died, I took her body to my native village, and she lies where my father lies, in this land where she was born, where she lived all her life. This is very important for me. She also wanted to be buried near my father. So I can say that human beings are human only when they are not regarded as some – don't regard themselves as some will o' the wisp or dust in the wind.

LAMB: You say that an interview you had with Time magazine and then with French television were the first steps toward glasnost, openness. Can you tell us why they were?

GORBACHEV: Because it was unusual. Before me, that never happened. If they answered questions, they did that in writing. They received questions in writing, and then they answered questions and gave them to reporters. But there were never the kind of exchanges in which I was ready to engage. And I was new to that thing. It was not easy. It was not simple for me then. We've been talking for almost an hour now, and I liked this atmosphere; I like this talk. It's not important for me whether or not the camera is on. But in the past, when I was beginning, when I saw the camera, I first became almost speechless.

It took all that change to change that. So glasnost began with the general secretary. And the general secretary who spoke sometimes in awkward phrases, who spoke sometimes not maybe very properly, but he spoke out, he expressed his emotions and his thoughts, and that too struck many people as very unusual, shocked many people. That began in Leningrad, where I went right after the election as general secretary, and I spoke to people and someone taped it. And then they showed the entire tape on TV, you know? They didn't intend to do that initially, but then that tape was shown, and all people in the Soviet Union were kind of set in motion. That was the beginning.

LAMB: Do you have any intention to write another book?

GORBACHEV: Well, I would like to say that a few days ago, I had a meeting with the officials from the publishers. And I and my colleagues, my associates for many years, Anatoly Chernayev and Vadim Zagladin, we wrote a book which I believe is a very necessary book for political leaders, for those who are interested in the problems. And that is called "The New Thinking: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow." I am convinced that we will not be able to break through the jungle of the stereotypes and the cliches that exist today if we do not sort things out in our minds. We need a revolution in our minds. And I believe that that can happen only on the basis of the new thinking based on the new situation, based on the understanding of the global challenges that mankind is facing. So this book is a very different book, but I'd like to see it published.

And in Japan also, a book was published of my dialogues with Mr. Ikeda, who is the founder of Sokka Gakai University. He had other philosophical discussions, for example, with Chingiz Aitmatov, whom I mentioned. And we had a very long dialogue with him for eight months, both oral dialogue and exchange of letters. We discussed moral values with him. And the Japanese published two volumes, and 150,000 books – copies have been sold in Japan of that volume. So I continue to write and I will continue to write. And I have still a lot to say. And what happens sometimes is, you know, like this: You have the Bible, and the Bible is not a very big book, but you have many volumes of commentary of the Bible. So this book is not that big, but there's a lot in that book that I could elaborate on.

For example, the drama that happened in Reykjavik, it's a long story, but here it's just a few pages. In fact, it was a real drama. And there were many events here in this book which I described very concisely but which could be elaborated upon. And if you add here the human dimension, – that is to say my opinions and views of my counterparts, of my partners, of people with whom I worked together – yes, I would have a lot to say. I don't

know whether I will have the strength. I don't know how many years God will be giving me, what his plans are. But, of course, I spent my life in politics, I made political speeches and I did not write books in the past. Now I am more interested in sharing my views and emotions and my thoughts, and I will continue doing it.

LAMB: This is what the cover of the book looks like. Our guest for the last hour has been Mikhail Gorbachev and his book of "Memoirs." Thank you.

The American and Russian People Don't Want a New Confrontation

(Newsweek)

After his White House meetings Mikhail Gorbachev talks about his relationship with Ronald Reagan and the dangers ahead for U.S.-Russian relations

With U.S.-Russian relations probably at their lowest point since the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union, former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev dropped in on the White House this week for a little schmoozing. The two countries have been at odds over arms control, media censorship and espionage. But on Monday, both Bush and Gorbachev were upbeat. "I am naturally an optimist," Gorbachev told reporters. "Today, I am even more an optimist." On Thursday, Gorbachev sat down in New York with NEWSWEEK'S Jonathan Alter. They covered a wide range of subjects, including Gorbachev's relationship with Ronald Reagan, President Putin and Gorbachev's new environmental initiative. Excerpts:

NEWSWEEK: *How are you holding up since your wife's death?*

Mikhail Gorbachev: I thought that with time I would feel less emotional and less sorrow, but so far I have not yet felt that time heals all wounds. My friends, my daughter tells me – and they're right – that the tragedy is real, but you have to move on, you have to live for yourself, for your children and grandchildren. I agree with them, but it's still very painful. I'm an optimist, I love life, I'm trying to travel a lot, to talk to people, but wherever I go, when I'm alone, the memories come back again.

Is democracy under siege in Russia right now?

No. No. We've had some setbacks, but Russia is moving along the path of democracy. Even at the moments when there seems to be a danger of a rollback, those moments pass, and it turns out that perestroika produced the kind of

results that enabled democracy to take root. Right now it's very important to make sure that the process of improving democratic institutions continues.

But it's not continuing. You have seen independent media such as NTV and NEWSWEEK'S partner, the magazine Itogi, snuffed out. How can the Russian people know what's going on in their government and society when this is happening?

You're right. My position is the same. What is more, in my conversation with the president [Vladimir Putin] I said perestroika wouldn't have happened without glasnost, and he wouldn't have been able to continue the process of change successfully without a free press. He said to me, "Yes, I agree. Without a free press, a responsible press, we would not be able to cope with our tasks."

Do you believe him?

Yes, I believe him. The most important point, which is underestimated in Russia and just isn't known abroad, is the difficult legacy the president inherited. Once, in our conversation, he said to me, "I inherited chaos – in the economy, in the affairs of the federation, in the area of laws, and in decision-making." So one of the tasks is to try to pull the country out of chaos. The important thing is that President Putin should not slide into an authoritarian system.

But isn't he moving in that direction?

I think he is under very strong pressure from various segments of [Russian] society. It's very hard for President Putin to break with the clans and the "family" [the Kremlin elite under Boris Yeltsin], and he is moving gradually to break with them. They still have a lot of influence, and one year is not enough for him to turn a country like Russia around. That doesn't mean he has done everything right. He has made mistakes, he has acted late in certain situations and he is criticized a lot. Nevertheless, the same people who criticize him also support him. They realize that the year that was spent trying to stabilize Russia will ultimately serve as a basis for moving ahead. And now, very

soon, it will become clear where our country is headed. The debate is very heated right now. Some people are ready to support the president without reservation; others demand to know what kind of Russia is he committed to. A lot will be decided this year.

If in 1988 or 1989 you had had more tolerance for bloodshed and moved the Soviet Army into Eastern Europe, for example, could we be sitting here in 2001 with you still in office and communism still intact?

In the name of what? In the name of ruthlessness.

Ruthlessness in the name of what? After all, none of that has anything to do with people who are committed to freedom, democracy and humanism. The main thing is that in the top office of one of the superpowers there was a person, Gorbachev, who was committed to these values. Before me, the people who gained power one way or another wanted just one thing – to consolidate that power. I started to reform that power, to decentralize that power, and ultimately that resulted in pulling the country out of the totalitarian system and moving it toward democracy. I did that for my people, I believed that my people deserved it. The society we lived in was rejected at a cultural level by the people.

But you could have imposed it even though it was rejected.

It could have been imposed, but the country was pregnant with perestroika and reforms. Look at Khrushchev and Kosygin; they made attempts to reform the country before. The key was that this kind of expectation by our people and our society coincided with the moment when the main office in the country was occupied by a person who understood the challenges of the times.... Once we made that decision for our country, should we say that the Czechs and Poles are inferior people? The Hungarians, the Bulgarians? And the Germans, when they wanted to reunify? I told the leaders of those countries at the very beginning of my tenure as leader, "We will not interfere in your affairs. You pursue the policies that you want, and you are responsible

for your countries." They thought this was just more of the same from another [Soviet] general secretary. I never violated that pledge.

How much of a role did Ronald Reagan's arms buildup play in the collapse of the Soviet Union?

I don't think it played a role. The Soviet Union was a victim of the political battles within the country itself. We saw that the country was not adapting to the challenges of science and technology, that it missed the boat on structural reforms, that was the main reason. The second reason was that people were not free, they were unhappy, and this couldn't be ignored. The arms race was not decisive.

It wasn't Ronald Reagan declaring, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!"?

[Makes dismissive gesture] Not that. Former president Bush was right when he said, "I will not be dancing on the wall." Some people thought he was not very active when the wall was crumbling. But let me tell you that President Bush and I followed up on what was done with President Reagan, and the process of addressing international conflicts went very fast.

What are the prospects for genuine arms reductions with the new President Bush?

I believe the United States needs to carefully consider the problems of missile defense, NATO expansion and nuclear nonproliferation. After all, these are issues of concern not only with Russia and China but also between the United States and its allies. So I ask, what is it all for? Rather than covering yourself with defense, it would be a lot better to enter a new phase of cooperation and partnership. If the United States goes further in the wrong direction, I won't even venture to say what would happen, because it could cause a new arms race. We have doves and hawks in both of our countries, but the American and Russian people don't want a new confrontation, they don't want an arms race, they face so many problems.... I had a chat with the president [George W. Bush]. He is a lively person—he makes a better impres-

sion in person than on TV. It's very important that U.S. leadership is aimed at a more stable world, more justice in relations between countries.

Did the Chernobyl disaster influence you to focus on environmental problems as you are now?

Today [April 26] is the 15th anniversary! Through a combination of circumstances, I became involved with the environment years ago, during the Brezhnev era, when I was working in the Caucasus. I saw that our rivers and lakes were in bad shape, and when I became leader of the Soviet Union, this became a priority. The environmentalists were the first to make use of glasnost. We closed down 1,300 factories in the Soviet Union for environmental reasons. I proposed at the United Nations and the nongovernmental forum on the environment that we needed to create a global organization to unite our efforts in dealing with environmental problems.

What is the No. 1 environmental problem?

We need to change the paradigm of economic development. If we continue to move ahead with a technological, industrial orientation, then in 30 or 40 years, according to prominent scientists, we will see irreversible changes within the biosphere. So the most important thing is to change the direction of our development; we need to normalize the relationship between man and nature. We need a new global consciousness, an environmentalization of consciousness. This is precisely the main task of our Green Cross International. Having worked in this area for seven years, I've seen a gradual change of attitudes in the world in favor of the environment. Recently there was a Gallup Poll that asked Americans what they thought the top priority should be, and 52 percent said the environment. So consciousness is the main problem, because it will affect politics, business, the legislative process and culture.

Is there any connection between the Green Cross and the original idea of the Red Cross?

When I spoke at the U.N., I said we needed a global organization like the Red Cross, and let's call it the Green

Cross. In 1992 representatives of the world's countries met [at the Earth Summit] in Rio de Janeiro, they decided to create Green Cross International, and they invited Gorbachev, who had stepped down by that time, to be responsible for it. So I believe that the environmental challenge is the No. 1 problem on the [international] agenda. If we don't succeed, then no theory, no system will matter, all the current disagreements will seem like peanuts compared with the destructive impact of the conflict between man and his environment.

May 2001

Democracy Will Fit the Needs of Every Nation
(Christian Science Monitor)

At a 20-year reunion of cold-war leaders, former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev expounds on peace – why it's elusive and why he's still pushing for it.

By Sophie Arie/ Correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor

TURIN, ITALY – It's early March, and Europe is shivering under piles of snow. In Turin, at the foot of the Italian Alps, the fur coats and fleece-lined boots are out, and traffic plows slowly through icy streets.

So when Mikhail Gorbachev arrives with his entourage of body guards and aides from Russia, he feels very much at home. "It's like arriving in Siberia," mutters Mr. Gorbachev's personal secretary, Pavel Palazchenko.

But neither foul weather nor airport chaos could stop this steamroller of a man from making it to northern Italy, where cold-war leaders, thinkers, and freedom fighters met earlier this month to celebrate the 20th anniversary of perestroika, Gorbachev's peaceful restructuring of the Soviet Union that eventually let to its collapse.

All day, amid the wood paneling and gold-framed portraits of Turin's military club, this Nobel Peace Prize winner played host to a stream of admirers, hardly stopping for breath. There was Lech Walesa, Poland's Solidarity leader, tapping away on a tiny laptop; Lord Geoffrey Howe, Margaret Thatcher's deputy in 1989; and Germany's former chancellor, Helmut Kohl.

Surrounded by contemporaries, many of whom appear frailer than he, Gorbachev is businesslike and energetic. Underneath his square-shouldered suit he is solid and fit. Since the world watched with relief 15 years ago, when Gorbachev allowed the Soviet Union to collapse, he looks almost unchanged, except that there is less hair on either

side of his trademark birthmark and what remains is now pure white.

* * *

When we meet, he is tired and hoping to escape his last appointment of the day.

"Good evening," I say, feeling as if I'm standing in front of a bull. For a moment there is a cold, expressionless stare. Then Gorbachev breaks into a smile and charges straight into me. Amid a flow of Russian, I find myself being hugged by this hero of 20th-century history. I grab onto his arm as he practically carries me down the corridor.

After some coaxing he agrees, through his interpreter, to talk. He insists upon sitting on a hard chair instead of the elegant hotel sofa. Everything this man does is firm and to the point: He does not shake your hand, he grips it; he does not walk, he strides; he does not chat, he proclaims.

Like many of his contemporaries still searching for the lessons of perestroika, Gorbachev has a sense of disappointment that the lifting of the "iron curtain" did not lead to global peace. New conflicts quickly emerged, and people's minds continue to be "militarized," he says.

"Unfortunately, there are too many political leaders who don't like dialogue, who cannot do dialogue, who cannot do diplomacy.

"Some people just like to shoot a little bit. Maybe the military need to shoot from time to time. They have all those weapons and shells and missiles. And the defense industry has to keep producing them. So maybe that is the logic.... But that approach has never really solved problems."

While Gorbachev believes "democracy will in the end fit the needs of every nation," he is not overly excited about recent signs of change in the Middle East. "It will take time. It will not take tanks; it will take time," he says referring to recent elections in Iraq.

"If democracy is imposed from the outside on a part of the world where there is Buddhism or Islam, ... if attempts are

made to impose in a mandatory way all the requirements of Western democracy, let's say American democracy, on these parts of the world, well, I don't think that will work."

Is the world a safer place today than it was 20 years ago? I ask.

"Yes," he says, without hesitation. "There are many things of concern and a lot of instability in the world today. But given we have avoided the threat of a nuclear war, I think yes."

Twenty years ago on March 11, when Gorbachev was unanimously elected to head the Soviet Communist Party a day after the death of its leader, Konstantin Chernenko, the threat of nuclear war was overarching. Leaders of nuclear powers kept a case full of codes and transmitters at arm's reach, ready to launch a nuclear attack at a moment's notice.

Now, the former Soviet leader is on a self-appointed, post-presidential mission to campaign for an end to all kinds of weapons of mass destruction. In Moscow, he and his daughter, Irina Vriganskaya, run a think tank called the Gorbachev Fund. As founder of the Geneva-based Green Cross International, he travels the world constantly.

But only now, he says, is he recovering from the "big blow" of the death of his wife, Raisa, in 1999. "I now feel that I should live and work for both of us."

"I am keeping extremely busy," he says. "I still go to bed at 2 a.m., like I did in those days when I worked late at the Kremlin. If I were to slow down I would feel worse."

Every morning, at his countryside home outside Moscow, he takes an "intense" one-hour, six-kilometer walk, followed by hot and cold showers. "That disciplines the body," he says.

He attributes much of his physical and mental strength to his upbringing on a peasant farm in the southern region of Stavropol. "From very early on, I did a lot of physical labor," he says. "Even though the food was nothing special, it was all natural and the air was pure."

One-third of the residents of Gorbachev's village Privolnoie starved to death during the famine of the 1930s brought on by Josef Stalin's rapid collectivization of Soviet agricul-

ture. Both of Gorbachev's grandfathers were arrested arbitrarily by Stalin's secret police.

This didn't prevent Gorbachev from joining the Komsomol (the Communist Youth League) in 1946.

"In school they kept choosing me to be the leader," he smiles. He stayed in the Stavropol region for another four years, driving a combine harvester on a state farm and winning a state medal for his work bringing in the harvest.

There he rose up through the local Komsomol, specializing in agricultural issues and becoming first secretary of the regional party committee in 1970. In 1980, he became the youngest member of the Politburo, and five years later he was leader of the Communist party.

In 1985, he introduced the social reforms – glasnost (openness) and perestroika (restructuring) – for which the world would come to know him and which would eventually contribute to the collapse of the Soviet Union.

On the world stage, he enjoys hero status and basks in the glory of his Nobel Peace Prize. At home, many who struggle with poverty and instability see him as the man who crippled Russia. In 1996, in a disastrous try at a political comeback, he won less than 1 percent of the vote.

It didn't help his popular standing, either, that he tried to wean Russians off vodka and onto mineral water.

As his Soviet-era secretary biographer Andrei Grachev puts it, "It turned out to be a much easier thing to transform the world than to transform Russia."

* * *

As for his homeland today, Gorbachev says critics of leader Vladimir Putin don't know the reality of present-day Russia.

Although there has been "an assault on the media" under Mr. Putin, the fact that two-thirds of Russians live in poverty means that "sometimes specific, limited authoritarian steps may be necessary," Gorbachev says.

Has it been hard to accept that you are more loved around the world than in your own country? I ask.

"That was not hard," he says, leaning forward, his large hands on his knees. "I know why it happened. What people got here [outside Russia] was the end of the cold war – the start of nuclear disarmament, free travel, open borders. Of course, the Russians got that, too. But at the same time, Russia had to go through a very profound change. That is a painful process. It affects millions of people."

"Nevertheless, time changes people's appreciation and judgment. So I am not resentful. In the big scheme of things, I would say I have had a uniquely happy life. I need to thank God for that."

March 29, 2005

We All Lost Cold War

Interview with Robert G. Kaiser (Washington Post)

In the throngs of mourners passing through the Capitol yesterday afternoon, one stood out – a vigorous senior citizen with a distinctive birthmark on his bald pate, whose tight gestures and bright eyes brought back memories of some of Ronald Reagan's greatest moments. Mikhail Gorbachev had flown from Moscow to pay respects to Nancy Reagan and to the man with whom he changed the course of history. "I gave him a pat," Gorbachev said later, reenacting the fond caress he had given Reagan's coffin.

Last evening, in an ornate conference room at the Russian Embassy on Wisconsin Avenue NW, Gorbachev gave a kind of personal eulogy to his first and most important American friend. It combined emotion, rigorous historical analysis and an interesting appraisal of Reagan's place in American life and history.

Reagan, said Gorbachev, 73, was "an extraordinary political leader" who decided "to be a peacemaker" at just the right moment – the moment when Gorbachev had come to power in Moscow. He, too, wanted to be a peacemaker, so "our interests coincided." Reagan's second term began in January 1985; two months later, Gorbachev was elected general secretary of the Soviet Communist Party.

But if he had warm, appreciative words for Reagan, Gorbachev brusquely dismissed the suggestion that Reagan had intimidated either him or the Soviet Union, or forced them to make concessions. Was it accurate to say that Reagan won the Cold War? "That's not serious," Gorbachev said, using the same words several times. "I think we all lost the Cold War, particularly the Soviet Union. We each lost $10 trillion," he said, referring to the money Russians and Americans spent on an arms race that lasted more than four decades. "We only won when the Cold War ended."

By Gorbachev's account, it was his early successes on the world stage that convinced the Americans that they had to deal with him and to match his fervor for arms control and other agreements that could reduce East-West tensions. "We had an intelligence report from Washington in 1987," he said, "reporting on a meeting of the National Security Council." Senior U.S. officials had concluded that Gorbachev's "growing credibility and prestige did not serve the interests of the United States" and had to be countered. A desire in Washington not to let him make too good an impression on the world did more to promote subsequent Soviet-American agreements than any American intimidation, he said. "They wanted to look good in terms of making peace and achieving arms control," he said of the Reagan administration.

The changes he wrought in the Soviet Union, from ending much of the official censorship to sweeping political and economic reforms, were undertaken not because of any foreign pressure or concern, Gorbachev said, but because Russia was dying under the weight of the Stalinist system. "The country was being stifled by the lack of freedom," he said. "We were increasingly behind the West, which . . . was achieving a new technological era, a new kind of productivity. . . . And I was ashamed for my country – perhaps the country with the richest resources on Earth, and we couldn't provide toothpaste for our people."

Reagan had been a kind of reformer in the United States, Gorbachev suggested. His first term as president "came at a time when the American nation was in a very difficult situation – not just in socio-economic terms, but psychologically, too," because of "the consequences of Vietnam and Watergate" and turmoil at home. Reagan rose to the occasion and "restored America's self-confidence. . . . This is what he accomplished."

"He was a person committed to certain values and traditions," Gorbachev continued. "For him the American dream was not just rhetoric. It was something he felt in his heart. In that sense he was an idealistic American."

By the end of that first term, Reagan was "the preeminent anti-communist," Gorbachev said. "Many people in our country, and in your country, regarded him as the quintessential hawk." Did Reagan's success in his first term, and the huge build-up of military power that he persuaded Congress to finance, affect the decision of the Soviet Politburo to choose a young and vigorous new leader in 1985 – someone who could, in effect, stand up to Reagan? "No, I think there was really no connection," he replied, chuckling. He said he was chosen for purely internal reasons that had nothing to do with the United States.

"All that talk that somehow Reagan's arms race forced Gorbachev to look for some arms reductions, etc., that's not serious. The Soviet Union could have withstood any arms race. The Soviet Union could have actually decided not to build more weapons, because the weapons we had were more than enough."

The big change was in Washington, Gorbachev said. "When he [Reagan] was elected to a second term, he, and especially the people close to him, began to think about how he would complete his second term – by producing more and more nuclear weapons . . . and conducting 'special operations' around the world, etc. etc."

The Soviet leadership, Gorbachev said, evidently referring to himself, concluded that instead, Reagan would "want to go down in history as a peacemaker" and would work with Moscow to do so. "A particularly positive influence on him – more than anyone else – was Nancy Reagan," Gorbachev said. "She deserves a lot of credit for that."

Once Reagan decided to try to make peace, he found an eager partner in Moscow, Gorbachev said. "The new Soviet leadership wanted to transform the country, to modernize the country, and we needed stability, we needed cooperation with other countries. . . . And we both knew what kind of weapons we each had. There were mountains of nuclear weapons. A war could start not because of a political decision, but just because of some technical failure. . . .

"A lot of forces on both sides had an interest in prolonging the arms race," Gorbachev added, including military-industrial lobbies on both sides. His predecessors in Moscow had concluded that continuing the race was the only way they could achieve security for the Soviet Union.

But by his new calculation in 1985, the situation was ripe for change. He and his comrades concluded that it was really inconceivable that anyone in the White House actually wanted to blow up the Soviet Union, just as they ruled out the possibility of ever deliberately trying to destroy the United States. So it would make more sense "to find ways to cooperate."

His first meeting with Reagan in Geneva in November 1985, "confirmed the correctness of our assessment of the situation," he continued. This was the first Soviet-American summit in seven years, and it did not begin well. After the first session, he recounted, his comrades asked for his impressions of Reagan. "He's a real dinosaur," Gorbachev quoted himself as saying. "And then I learned," he added, "there was a leak from the American delegation, that . . . Reagan [described] Gorbachev as 'a die-hard Communist.' "

But just a day and a half later, the two men signed an agreement that stated their mutual conviction that nuclear war was unthinkable. They initiated a batch of new cooperative enterprises intended to improve relations. "That was the beginning of hope," Gorbachev said. At subsequent meetings at Reykjavik the next year, in Washington in 1987 and in Moscow in 1988, relations got better and better. By the time he came to Moscow in 1988, Gorbachev recalled with evident satisfaction, Reagan had changed his views.

"An American reporter asked President Reagan, while we were taking a walk . . . 'Mr. President, do you still regard the Soviet Union as an evil empire?' And Reagan said no."

June 15, 2004

No Turning Back for Russia

Interview with Kim Murphy (Los Angeles Times)

Despite problems with his country's democracy, the ex-president believes totalitarianism is dead.

MOSCOW – For much of the world, he is the voice of Russian democracy, the man who, in one of the world's most repressive nations, opened a door called perestroika to a pluralistic future and helped end the Cold War.

But with increasing frequency, former Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev is being called on to defend Russia against fears that the world's largest nation is slipping back toward its authoritarian past.

He is blunt: "I don't think we have had a really free and fair election" since 1990, Gorbachev said Wednesday. Instead of the largely free media that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, he said, "there are problems with limiting freedom of speech" on government-run television channels.

But in a wide-ranging interview, Gorbachev rejected claims that President Vladimir V. Putin, a former KGB agent running for reelection in March 14 voting, is pulling the country toward totalitarianism, and warned the West against applying too much pressure to push Russia toward a more democratic future.

"Yes, we need to be concerned," Gorbachev said. "Particularly given that the parliamentary election campaign and the presidential election campaign have aroused passions. And yes, there is a sense of exacerbation. But in Russia, let me assure you, authoritarianism is a thing of the past.

"A return to an authoritarian regime will not happen," he added. "It's no longer possible. Not today, and certainly not possible when the younger generation of Russians will be assuming all power, all responsibility for the country."

Gorbachev reserved his sharpest warnings for the United States and Europe, which in recent months have been criti-

cal of Russia on issues such as the arrest of former Yukos Oil Co. Chairman Mikhail Khodorkovsky, state takeover of most television broadcast networks, alleged human rights abuses in Chechnya and elections in December that resulted in the pro-Putin United Russia party gaining a virtual lock on parliament.

"My impression is that the West, the United States, and perhaps Europe even more than the United States, were happy when Russia was lying face down. But Russia cannot lie face down. Russia will not be stifled," he said in remarks uncharacteristically defiant for a politician who has been one of his nation's chief bridges with the West.

"Russia will reject Putin or anyone else if the current situation doesn't change," he said. "Putin has a chance now to change the situation. It's a new chance. Russia is rising, Russia is beginning to move ahead. It will be moving faster, and those … who are trying to drive Russia into a corner would be making a mistake."

Putin, elected in 2000 and expected to easily win a second term, has engineered the beginnings of an economic recovery, guaranteeing wage and pension payments and boosting production. But critics say the relative stability has come at the expense of a free broadcast media and free elections. Opposition candidates have little backing and limited access to the media, and Putin has refused to debate his six opponents.

Gorbachev was the first – and last – president of the Soviet Union, and his moves to open the communist behemoth to Western political and economic ideas are blamed by many Russians for the collapse of the Soviet Union, the end of the nation's status as a superpower and the beginning of years of economic crisis that reached their peak under the leadership of his successor, Boris N. Yeltsin. [...]

In recent years, Gorbachev has headed his own political and charitable foundation and spoken out around the world on democracy, disarmament, globalization and Russian politics. He won a Grammy Award last month, along

with former President Clinton and actress Sophia Loren, for narrating "Peter and the Wolf," a CD based on the symphony by Russian composer Sergei Prokofiev.

Gorbachev, who turned 73 this week, has been largely supportive of Putin but unmistakably critical of the December parliamentary elections that resulted in United Russia and its allies winning more than 300 seats, and every committee chairmanship, in the 450-seat legislative assembly.

"I don't like the way the elections happened, and I don't like the way the elections are happening now," he said.

Though there has been improvement in legislation regarding media coverage of campaigns, "the achievements in terms of having really free and fair elections are very few," Gorbachev said. Voter turnout was so low in December, he said – less than 56% – that the ruling party now "actually has the support of only a small section of the people."

In the end, he said, it will be up to Putin to set the course.

"The president's position will be decisive," Gorbachev said. "If he uses his power to continue democratic reforms, to modernize the country, to address the country's many problems, then Russia will move forward. If he uses power only to retain power, to make his own power even firmer, then this, for me, would be a big disappointment."

March 4, 2004

The Greening of Mikhail Gorbachev

Interview with Barry James (International Herald Tribune)

Pollution Is as Big a Threat as Cold War Arsenals Were, He Says

PARIS – For the man who once ran a superpower, only one subject is big enough for his global vision: the environment.

Mikhail Gorbachev, the last Soviet president, says the world's deteriorating ecology poses as great a danger to mankind today as did the nuclear standoff between the superpowers at the height of the Cold War.

Since the death of his wife, Raisa, more than 16 months ago, Mr. Gorbachev has thrown himself into his work with the Green Cross International, the environmental organization he founded following the United Nations Earth Summit meeting in Rio de Janeiro in 1993.

"No, I haven't gotten over the loss," he said in an interview here. "We lived together for almost 50 years and at my age it is a very difficult situation, of course. But I try to get over it, and for this reason I take on a heavy burden of work and more and more activities.

"I have my daughter and my grandchildren, of course. I don't think Raisa would have approved if I had been completely crushed by sorrow."

Mr. Gorbachev was in France for the opening this week of a Green Cross office in Lyon, which will be the coordinating center for a campaign for an "Earth Charter" that he hopes the UN will adopt on the 10th anniversary of the Rio conference. The charter, a parallel to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, would be a code of environmental good conduct for civil society.

Mr. Gorbachev has been interested in the environment since he was a boy growing up in the south Caucasus, where he saw dust storms destroying farm land. Later he witnessed the shrinking of the Aral Sea and the tragedy of Chernobyl,

which convinced him of the need for greater government transparency, or glasnost, and the involvement of ordinary citizens in decision-making about the environment.

Governments have not responded adequately to the problems, he contends, citing the meager results of the Kyoto conference on climate change and the failure of the follow-up climate conference at The Hague last year. It is therefore up to nongovernment organizations such as his own to keep up the pressure.

Asked how he viewed other environmental organizations, such as Greenpeace, he said, "I sometimes judge their methods severely, but the content of their work is serious, and I support it."

The task of the Green Cross, as he sees it, is to focus attention on specific problems, particularly on the environmental consequences of conflict – including the lingering effects of the defoliant Agent Orange in Vietnam, the stockpiles of chemical weapons or, more recently, the use of depleted uranium in warfare.

The Green Cross also is seeking to avert conflict over access to supplies of clean water, and Mr. Gorbachev has met personally with leaders in the Middle East on the peaceful sharing of the Jordan River. Now he is seeking to involve corporations, such as the French utility owners Suez Lyonnaise des Eaux and Vivendi, in improving water supplies in the Middle East and Africa.

Mr. Gorbachev said the Chernobyl disaster had convinced him of the need to reinforce democracy and the freedom of the press and of expression to create "a climate in which people can pose questions and find solutions."

"When we introduced freedom of the press in Soviet Union, people started to ask questions," he said, leading the government to close hundreds of polluting factories. Today, he added, "Russia has become very ecologically minded."

But he warned that the protests of citizens and the actions of nongovernment organizations would be limited

"if journalists do nothing, and if parliaments do nothing to adopt suitable laws."

Asked if he thought the world was a better or worse place since he left office, Mr. Gorbachev said, "I think things are better, much better, because the situation today has some hopes. It is not completely desperate." Major international conflicts, such as the one in Cambodia, have been brought to an end, and a start made toward peace in the Middle East. Confrontation between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Warsaw Pact has given way to cooperation.

But in an apparent reference to the proposal by the current U.S. administration to create a national missile defense system, he said: "The fact that a great power like the Soviet Union has left the world scene seems to be creating a temptation toward new geopolitical stratagems. In my view, the strong position that America occupies at the moment must not be transformed into a hegemony but into a partnership. I do hope that the Bush team will reflect before adopting positions and will engage in discussions with Russia and Europe."

February 1, 2001

Perestroika 20 Years Later: Gorbachev Reflects
(Global Viewpoint)

Mikhail Gorbachev, the last president of the Soviet Union, now heads Green Cross International. He spoke with Carlos Gardels and Nathan Gardels July 8, 2005 at the Gorbachev Foundation headquarters in a modern bank building on the outskirts of Moscow. In the summer of 1985, he first announced his ideas of "new thinking" and "perestroika."

GLOBAL VIEWPOINT: Your policies of "perestroika" and "new thinking" on global affairs were announced 20 years ago this summer. How do you evaluate their accomplishments and failures now?

GORBACHEV: Perestroika and new thinking were attempts to respond to the global challenge of history – above all, interdependence. The momentum it generated and the changes it introduced were so fundamental that it shifted the paradigm not only of Russia but of the foundation of the global order. It affected everyone by ending the Cold War and igniting the Velvet Revolution in Eastern and Central Europe, leading in turn to a new Europe. It opened the way for globalization.

Perestroika's greatest achievement was to awaken and liberate the mind. People were freed to think without the constraint of fear – of the authorities or of nuclear war. For the first time, they had the right to choose. The effect of that is long term, and not yet over.

The failed coup and the breakup of the Soviet Union put an official end to perestroika. But it had gone too far already, to the point of no return. Twenty years later, there are young people in Russia who have only known freedom. That is a big accomplishment.

In perestroika's wake there have been setbacks due to domestic politics in Russia that have made things worse for

us – such as Yeltsin's "shock therapy," a cavalier and disastrous great leap forward to a market economy. Instead of the evolution envisioned by perestroika, this was another catastrophe in the name of revolution. My idea was that perestroika would unfold over a 30-year-period. But I was accused of going too slow.

I'm not trying to justify myself. We made mistakes. For example, we waited too long to reform the Party. We waited too long to reform the Union, which had become an administrative body instead of a true federation. With the growth of the intelligentsia and professional class in all the republics, they had become capable of governing themselves more fully. We should have decentralized more quickly. Not moving on these fronts made the coup possible.

There have been mistakes also on the side of the West. When I proposed perestroika for our country and new thinking for the world, it started with the following words: "We want to be properly understood." There is still not enough understanding of Russia, even now. America and Europe should be grateful to us and respect Russia. Yet, today Russia is suspected instead of trying to rebuild its empire, of becoming a dangerous country again. That is wrong.

As perestroika unfolded, there was initially a good degree of understanding with the West – we became closer for a while. We thought "a different time has come." But it didn't. At some point, things began to change. I'm not only blaming the Americans because we made our mistakes, too, in Chechnya, for example. But Americans have treated us without proper respect. Russia is a serious partner. We are a country with a tremendous history, with diplomatic experience. It is an educated country that has contributed much to science.

The Soviet Union used to be not just an adversary but also a partner of the West. There was some balance in that system. Even though the U.S. and Europe signed a charter for a new Europe, the Charter of Paris, to demonstrate that a

new world was possible, that charter was ignored and political gains were pursued to take advantage of the vacuum. The struggle for spheres of influence – contrary to the new thinking we propounded – was resumed by the U.S. The first result was the crisis in Yugoslavia in which NATO was brought in to gain advantage over Russia.

We were ready to build a new security architecture for Europe. But after the breakup of the Soviet Union and the end of the Warsaw Pact, NATO forgot all its promises. It was supposed to become more of a political than a military organization. NATO decided it would be an organization that intervenes anywhere on "humanitarian grounds." We have by now seen intervention not only in Yugoslavia, but in Iraq – intervention without any mandate or permission from the United Nations.

So much for the new thinking of 20 years ago the West so eagerly embraced when I announced it. The whole idea was that there were global interests beyond national interests – in the economy, in security and in the environment. Yet more than 15 years have been wasted since the end of the Cold War, as nations still act mainly in their own interests.

Most of all, the U.S. has engaged in a victory complex, a superiority complex. Perhaps only now, mired down in Iraq without allies, is it just beginning to understand that the world cannot be ruled from one center and order other countries about. They need their own perestroika to end their old way of thinking.

GLOBAL VIEWPOINT: To return to your point about shock therapy, would you agree that one lesson here is that are no shortcuts in history? That you can't suddenly leap from Soviet socialism to capitalism any more than Lenin could leap from a peasant society to industrial communism?

GORBACHEV: Absolutely. Shock therapy was Bolshevism in reverse. The West, of course, applauded Yeltsin in attempting the misadventure of this historical shortcut. Instead of being

the person who destroyed communism, he was the person who ruined a huge country.

GLOBAL VIEWPOINT: You spoke about perestroika liberating the mind. Ironically, one of the greatest beneficiaries of Russia's turn to freedom of thinking, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, now says liberalism is destroying Russian culture. There is too much freedom, in his view. He condemns the crime, commercialism, permissiveness and sexual revolution that has engulfed Russia these days.

GORBACHEV: Solzhenitsyn has made this statement: "It is Gorbachev's glasnost that has ruined everything." Well, without glasnost he would still be living in exile in Vermont chopping wood.

Look, I greatly value Solzhenitsyn's contribution to the liberation that came to Russia. There is no doubt that he had the courage, for example in "Gulag Archipelago," to speak about things during the Cold War that others would not dare mention. Historically, his place is large.

But when I think back to the way he returned to Russia – he looked upon himself as a prophet returning in triumph. He was hoping that he would be able, at this new stage in history, to give expression to the people. But he was out of step.

Of course, many things he is saying are just and right – for example about the shameful gap between the rich and poor in Russia. He is right to condemn the oligarchs as well as the return to power of the army of bureaucrats, many of whom are the same ones who ran the Soviet Union. He is right to condemn the bribery and the plunder of the nation's wealth. He is right to say that the main goal of policy today ought to be to preserve Russian culture and build Russia, not enrich a few and tear down the nation.

But Russia's problems are not caused by democracy, but by the lack of it. They have happened because democratic checks and balances, democratic institutions, have not taken hold. Independent courts have not yet evolved.

Only democracy can answer the concerns Solzhenitsyn expresses, not a strong hand, as he wants. We've been down that road. That is a vain hope.

GLOBAL VIEWPOINT: From the West, it looks like Vladimir Putin is trying to restore the strong hand of centralized power Solzhenitsyn wants. Isn't that so?

GORBACHEV: I don't think the West understands what we are facing in Russia historically – three centuries of Mongol domination, serfdom, communism. Russia is a vast country whose governance cannot be totally decentralized. You have to seek a delicate balance between decentralization and centralization to keep stability.

Under Yeltsin, we had unchecked decentralization. That didn't create more democracy, but regional feudalism. Putin is right to have ended that arrangement and forced regional leaders to make their laws conform to national laws.

Currently, we have the prerequisites for moving ahead to complete Russia's reforms. Putin has proposed a political program for the coming years that includes fighting poverty, promotion of small- and medium-sized business, helping move Russia's manufacturing base toward post-industrialism.

This is the right direction for Russia. But the question remains: Who will implement those goals? Unfortunately, the current (cabinet) government and parliament are incapable of doing so. This is the problem.

Their reform of the social benefit system – monetizing in-kind benefits such as housing – was a disaster that would have put widows and veterans out on the street with only change in their pockets. To see these poor people protesting their dispossession out in the streets in the cold, in winter, was a shock to all of Russia.

Putin had to intervene to ask the government to review these ill-considered reforms. For perhaps the first time, there

is now a serious debate about the future of education and health care.

For the first time, teachers, for example, are manifesting their position in a very organized fashion to try to influence legislation. This activation of civil society is new for Russia. This is exactly what we need.

GLOBAL VIEWPOINT: Your old Politburo colleague in perestroika and glasnost, Aleksandr Yakovlev, has said that under Putin we are seeing a "restoration of the nomenklatura" that existed in the Soviet days. Is that not right?

GORBACHEV: I don't think Putin is restoring the old nomenklatura. What is true is that people are calling for Putin to fight the bureaucracy, but, in reality, little is changing. It is not true, though, that Putin wants to restore Soviet-style power.

GLOBAL VIEWPOINT: Zhao Ziyang, the Chinese reformist leader who died this year, was purged after Tiananmen for, among other reasons, imparting "state secrets" to you during your visit there in June 1989, just before the crackdown. Apparently their concern was that he revealed to you the fact of the continuing power of Deng Xiaoping, who had formally retired. What did he say to you?

GORBACHEV: This is a ludicrous accusation. Zhao only emphasized to me that China was working on the basis of the leadership of Deng and that it was very important to continue along the line of reform set by Deng.

There was a debate at the time within the Chinese leadership about how to end the student occupation of Tiananmen Square. We knew they were discussing the situation, but we did not interfere. We were there to talk about normalizing relations between our countries.

I did say that the Tiananmen situation should be defused politically and that I was confident a political solution

would be found. I was wrong, unfortunately. For China, this remains a factor.

GLOBAL VIEWPOINT: A good factor or bad factor? The Chinese leadership's view today is that Russia descended into chaos and stagnation because democratization got in the way of economic reform.

GORBACHEV: It is silly to say that China's growth is due to the lack of democracy, and this justifies the Tiananmen crackdown. China is growing because the overall course of reform as charted by Deng – openness to the outside world in trade and foreign investment – has remained steady and sustained for decades.

Despite China's tremendous achievement, however, hundreds of millions of people still live near absolute poverty. Their environmental problems are immense. In many regions, the water table is drying up, threatening their ability to feed themselves because their agriculture depends on irrigation.

Inescapably, they still will have to address the issue of democracy and political reform. As in Russia, the high level of education of the growing professional and middle class simply demands this. Perhaps the Chinese leaders are coming to understand this. Until the last couple of years, the Chinese have not allowed my books to be published there. Now they do. That means something is happening.

All of us should help China go forward incrementally, step by step, without provoking some kind of backlash. The worst thing would be another Cultural Revolution-type disruption. They are right to be cautious. Shock therapies and cultural revolutions make any problems you have worse.

GLOBAL VIEWPOINT: Is the main lesson you would draw that historical change must evolve incrementally so people can properly absorb it? Radical breaks, whether Bolshevist or otherwise, undermine change and cause a reaction?

GORBACHEV: Yes, indeed. Look at what happened when the French people voted against the European constitution. It is not that the French are against a united Europe. They voted against the constitution for one reason: They became worried at the problems which multiplied in the European Union because enlargement took place so rapidly. People thought the constitution would give the ruling elites the power to make decisions on their future without consulting them.

The pace of change is always the number one problem in any reform. In our case, a pace for change was set in motion in the Soviet Union that society could not sustain.

Gorbachev's Message Is Still Worth Listening To

Interview with Carl Mortished (The Times)

There is a struggle for power and influence in the Kremlin, reckons Mikhail Gorbachev, and if the wrong people win, it could set Russia on a destabilizing course. The man who brought an end to Soviet communism is backing Vladimir Putin. It seems to be more than just courtesy to an incumbent Russian President from a former leader. Mr. Gorbachev is retired from politics and this week was in London, participating in the Leaders in London conference. Speaking to The Times, the former General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, said that there were those within the Russian Government who would like to co-opt the agenda and set Russia on a different course.

This talk might set off familiar alarms among business analysts and Washington conservatives but they would be hearing the wrong bells. Mr. Gorbachev does not fear a leftist conspiracy, the so-called siloviki, a hawkish group of former KGB officers that some say is steering the President in an anti-business direction.

For Mr. Gorbachev, the danger comes from the right. "There is a real battle going on in the cabinet; there are differing approaches," he says. He blames "neo-liberals" in the Government for pushing policies that would not benefit the Russian people.

Who are these neo-liberals? "We see them everyday, the ministers of finance and economy," Mr. Gorbachev said. He points to the Government's attempt late last year to monetize Soviet-era social benefits, such as free public transport, medicines and electricity for pensioners, replacing them with cash payments.

Public outrage against what was seen as the Government's attempt to shirk its responsibilities led to the first mass pro-

tests in Russia since the fall of communism. He fears that there would have been social unrest had the Government been allowed to continue with the policies. "It was winter, it was cold," he said.

According to Mr. Gorbachev, it was President Putin's intervention that caused the withdrawal of some of the measures. " I would like him to succeed in economic modernization for the benefit of the people," he said.

Mr. Gorbachev's personal charm is well documented; he won over President Reagan during the arms talks in the 1980s and made friends with Margaret Thatcher, whom he visited while in London this week. Still, for a man who led a much-feared totalitarian state, Mr. Gorbachev is disarming and without pomposity. Short in stature, he is animated, fixing you with his gaze and requests, through his interpreter, questions that are to the point and not too broad.

Thrown off balance by a plea for accuracy from a (former) politician, Mr. Gorbachev took over. "There might be some slippage to authoritarianism but there can be no return to communism (in Russia)," he said, dismissing those who worry about Russia as a stable place for investment. "China is stable even though the regime is authoritarian."

Nor does he have time for the critics of President Putin's attack on Mikhail Khodorkovsky, the former Yukos chief executive who is serving a jail sentence for tax evasion. Indeed, he seems to suggest further initiatives against the business oligarchs would not be unwelcome.

The unraveling of the Soviet Union in 1989 when the republics broke free was Mr. Gorbachev's downfall. Unpopular and stripped of his Union, the Soviet leader was supplanted by Boris Yeltsin, who approved the massive sell-off of Russia's oil production associations.

October 20, 2005

About Gorbachev

Man of the Decade: The Unlikely Patron of Change

By Lance Morrow
(TIME)

The 1980s came to an end in what seemed like a magic act, performed on a world-historical stage. Trapdoors flew open, and whole regimes vanished. The shell of an old world cracked, its black iron fragments dropping away, and something new, alive, exploded into the air in a flurry of white wings.

Revolution took on a sort of electronic lightness of being. A crowd of half a million Czechoslovaks in Wenceslas Square would powder into electrons, stream into space at the speed of light, bounce off a satellite and shoot down to recombine in millions of television images around the planet.

The transformation had a giddy, hallucinatory quality, its surprises tumbling out night after night. The wall that divided Berlin and sealed an international order crumbled into souvenirs. The cold war, which seemed for so long part of the permanent order of things, was peacefully deconstructing before the world's eyes. After years of numb changelessness, the communist world has come alive with an energy and turmoil that have taken on a bracing, potentially anarchic life of their own. Not even Stalinist Rumania was immune.

The magician who set loose these forces is a career party functionary, faithful communist, charismatic politician, in-

ternational celebrity and impresario of calculated disorder named Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev. He calls what he is doing – and permitting – a revolution. His has (so far) been a bloodless revolution, without the murderous, conspiratorial associations that the word has carried in the past. In novel alliance with the glasnost of world communications, Gorbachev became the patron of change: Big Brother's better twin. His portraits, like icons at a saint's-day festival, waved amid a swarm of Czechs. The East German young chanted "Gorby! Gorby!" to taunt the police.

The world has acquired simultaneously more freedom and more danger. At the beginning of the age of exploration, a navigator's map would mark unknown portions of the great ocean with the warning HERE BE MONSTERS. Gorbachev knows about the monsters, about the chaos he may have to struggle across, a chaos that he even helped to create.

The potential for violence, and even for the disintegration of the Soviet order, is enormous. The U.S.S.R. is a vast amalgam of nationalities that have always been restive under the imperial Soviet system. To mix the politics of openness and the economics of scarcity is a messy and dangerous experiment.

Gorbachev and his reformist allies in Eastern Europe have managed to suppress at least one monster – the state's capacity for terrible violence against its citizens. The Chinese and, until last week, the Rumanians were not so lucky. The Chinese students carried portraits of the Soviet leader, and they were shouting, "In Russia they have Gorbachev; in China we have whom?" The yin and yang of 1989: tanks vs. glasnost, the dead hand of the past vs. Gorbachev's vigorous, risky plunge into the future. Gorbachev is a hero for what he would not do – in fact, could not do, without tearing out the moral wiring of his ambitions for the future. In that sense, as in so many others, the fallen Rumanian tyrant Nicolae Ceausescu played the archvillain.

Gorbachev has been a powerful, increasingly symbolic presence in the world's imagination since he first came to

power in 1985. But what exactly does he symbolize? Change and hope for a stagnant system, motion, creativity, an amazing equilibrium, a gift for improvising a stylish performance as he hang glides across an abyss. Mikhail Gorbachev, superstar: the West went predictably overboard in what one skeptic called its "Gorbasms."

But Gorbachev and his program of perestroika are far less popular at home. Estee Lauder and Christian Dior opened exclusive shops on Gorky Street. Meanwhile, soap, sugar, tea, school notebooks, cigarettes, sausage and other meats, butter, fruits and vegetables, and even matches are scarce. Only rubles are plentiful. As Alexis de Tocqueville wrote in his treatise on the French Revolution, "The most perilous moment for a bad government is when it seeks to mend its ways. Only consummate statecraft can enable a king to save his throne when, after a long spell of oppressive rule, he sets to improving the lot of his subjects." Chaos rides in on rising expectations.

Right now, in the dead of the Russian winter, Gorbachev may have reached his own most dangerous moment. Nonetheless, with remarkable imagination and daring, he has embarked on a course, perhaps now irreversible, that is reshaping the world. He is trying to transform a government that was not just bad or inept but inherently destructive, its stupidity regularly descending into evil. He has been breaking up an old bloc to make way for a new Europe, altering the relationship of the Soviet empire with the rest of the world and changing the nature of the empire itself. He has made possible the end of the cold war and diminished the danger that a hot war will ever break out between the superpowers. Because he is the force behind the most momentous events of the '80s and because what he has already done will almost certainly shape the future, Mikhail Gorbachev is TIME's Man of the Decade.

Some people regard Gorbachev as a hero because they believe he is presiding over the demise of a loathsome ideology. But he does not mean to abolish communism. On the

contrary, he wants to save it by transforming it. The supreme leader of an atheistic state was baptized as a child. Now, in a sense, Gorbachev means to accomplish the salvation of an entire society that has gone astray. Yet he has not found an answer to the question of how communism can be redeemed and still be communism.

Gorbachev is playing Prospero in a realm ruled by Caliban for the past 72 years. He aspires not merely to correct the "deformations of socialism," as he calls the legacies of Stalinism and the incompetences of centralized economic planning. Gorbachev's ambition is more comprehensive: to repair deformations of the Russian political character that go back centuries. The Renaissance and Enlightenment never arrived in Russia. Feudalism lived on, and endures now in the primitive authoritarianism of the Soviet system.

Sigmund Freud once said that human self-esteem received three great blows from science. First, Copernicus proved that the earth is not the center of the universe. Then Darwin showed that man is not organically superior to animals; and finally, psychoanalysis asserted that man is not "master in his own house." The self-esteem of Soviet communism suffered all three blows at once but lumbered on for years in a dusk of denial. Despite the pretensions of Marx and Lenin, the system that bears their name is manifestly not the ordained design of history, not superior to all others, and not even the master of its own house.

Mikhail Gorbachev is the Copernicus, Darwin and Freud of communism all wrapped in one. He wants his fellow citizens – and his comrades – at last to absorb this trinity of disillusionments and reconcile themselves into a whole and modern society.

The November day before he met with the Pope in Rome (not the least of the year's astonishments), Gorbachev said, "We need a revolution of the mind." The metaphysics of global power has changed. Markets are now more valuable than territory, information more powerful than military hardware. For many years, the Soviets lived in paranoid iso-

lation, fearful of Western culture (an old Russian tradition) and estranged from it in somewhat the way that Ayatullah Khomeini's Iranians quarantined themselves from the secular poisons of the West. Peasant cultures shrink from foreign contamination.

Gorbachev is a sort of Zen genius of survival, a nimble performer who can dance a side step, a showman and manipulator of reality, a suave wolf tamer. He has a way of turning desperate necessities into opportunities and even virtues.

Much more than that, Gorbachev is a visionary enacting a range of complex and sometimes contradictory roles. He is simultaneously the communist Pope and the Soviet Martin Luther, the apparatchik as Magellan and McLuhan. The Man of the Decade is a global navigator.

January 1, 1990

Mikhail Gorbachev

By Tatiana Tolstaya

By gently pushing open the gates of reform, he unleashed a democratic flood that deluged the Soviet universe and washed away the cold war

In 1985, when the first rumblings of Gorbachev's thunder disturbed the moldy Soviet silence, the holy fools on the street – the people who always gather at flea markets and around churches – predicted that the new Czar would rule seven years. They assured anyone interested in listening that Gorbachev was "foretold in the Bible," that he was an apocalyptic figure: he had a mark on his forehead. Everyone had searched for signs in previous leaders as well, but Lenin's speech defect, Stalin's mustache, Brezhnev's eyebrows and Khrushchev's vast baldness were utterly human manifestations. The unusual birthmark on the new General Secretary's forehead, combined with his inexplicably radical actions, gave him a mystical aura. Writing about Gorbachev – who he was, where he came from, what he was after, and what his personal stake was (there had to be one) became just as intriguing as trying to figure out what Russia's future would be. After he stepped down from his position as head of state, many people of course stopped thinking about him, and in Russian history, that in itself is extraordinary. How Gorbachev left power and what he has done since are unique episodes in Russian history, but he could have foreseen his own resignation: he prepared the ground and the atmosphere that made that resignation possible. Gorbachev is such an entirely political creature, and yet so charismatic, that it's hard to come to any conclusions about him as a person. Every attempt I know of has failed miserably. The phenomenon of Gorbachev has not yet been explained, and most of what I've read on the subject reminds me of how a biologist, psychologist, lawyer or statistician might describe an angel.

Gorbachev has been discussed in human terms, the usual investigations have been made, his family tree has been studied, a former girlfriend has been unearthed (so what?), the spotlight has been turned on his wife. His completely ordinary education, colleagues, friends and past have all been gone over with a fine-tooth comb. By all accounts, Gorbachev shouldn't have been Gorbachev. Then the pundits study the politics of the Soviet Union, evoke the shadow of Ronald Reagan and Star Wars, drag out tables and graphs to show that the Soviet economy was doomed to self-destruct, that it already had, that the country couldn't have gone on that way any longer. But what was Reagan to us, when we had managed to overcome Hitler, all while living in the inhuman conditions of Stalinism? No single approach – and there have been many – can explain Gorbachev. Perhaps the holy fools with their metaphysical scenario were right when they whispered that he was marked and that seven years were given to him to transform Russia in the name of her as yet invisible but inevitable salvation and renaissance. After the August 1991 coup, Gorbachev was deprived of power, cast out, laughed at and reproached with all the misfortunes, tragedies and lesser and greater catastrophes that took place during his rule. Society always reacts more painfully to individual deaths than it does to mass annihilation. The crackdowns in Georgia and Lithuania – the Gorbachev regime's clumsy attempts to preclude the country's collapse – led to the death of several dozen people. Their names are known, their photographs were published in the press, and one feels terribly sorry for them and their families. Yeltsin's carnage in Chechnya, the bloody events in Tadjikistan, the establishment of feudal orders in the central Asian republics and the massive eradication of all human rights throughout the territory of the former Soviet Union are, however, regarded indifferently, as if they were in the order of things, as if they were not a direct consequence of the current regime's irresponsible policies. Corruption did exist under Gorbachev; after Gorbachev it blossomed with

new fervor. Oppressive poverty did exist under Gorbachev; after Gorbachev it reached the level of starvation. Under Gorbachev the system of residence permits did fetter the population; after Gorbachev hundreds upon hundreds of thousands lost their property and the roofs over their heads and set off across the country seeking refuge from people as angry and hungry as they were.

No doubt Gorbachev made mistakes. No doubt his maneuvering between the Scylla of a totalitarian regime and the Charybdis of democratic ideas was far from irreproachable. No doubt he listened to and trusted the wrong people, no doubt his hearing and sight were dulled by the enormous pressure and he made many crude, irreversible mistakes. But maybe not. In a country accustomed to the ruler's answering for everything, even burned stew and spilled milk are held against the Czar and are never forgiven. Similarly, shamanism has always been a trait of the Russian national character: we cough and infect everyone around us, but when we all get sick, we throw stones at the shaman because his spells didn't work. When Gorbachev was overthrown, for some reason everyone thought it was a good thing. The conservatives were pleased because in their eyes he was the cause of the regime's demise (they were absolutely right). The radicals were happy because in their opinion he was an obstacle to the republics' independence and too cautious in enacting economic reforms. (They too were correct.) This man with the stain on his forehead attempted simultaneously to contain and transform the country, to destroy and reconstruct, right on the spot. One can be Hercules and clean the Augean stable. One can be Atlas and hold up the heavenly vault. But no one has ever succeeded in combining the two roles. Surgery was demanded of Gorbachev, but angry shouts broke out whenever he reached for the scalpel. He wasn't a Philippine healer who could remove a tumor without blood or incisions. Strangely enough, no one ever thought Gorbachev particularly honest, fair or noble. But after he

was gone, the country was overwhelmed by a flood of dishonesty, corruption, lies and outright banditry that no one expected. Those who reproached him for petty indulgences at government expense – for instance, every room of his government dacha had a television set – themselves stole billions; those who were indignant that he sought advice from his wife managed to set up their closest relatives with high-level, well-paid state jobs. All the pygmies of previous years, afraid to squeak in the pre-Gorbachev era, now, with no risk of response, feel justified in insulting him. The pettiness of the accusations speaks for itself. Gorbachev's Pizza Hut ads provoke particular ridicule, and while the idea is indeed amusing, they pay his rent. The scorn reminds me of how the Russian upper crust once castigated Peter the Great for being unafraid to roll up his sleeves and get his hands dirty. Amazingly, in our huge, multinational country, where the residents of St. Petersburg speak with a different accent from those of Moscow, Gorbachev's southern speech is held against him. After his resignation, Gorbachev suddenly became very popular in an unexpected quarter: among young people. He became an element of pop culture, a decorative curlicue of the apolitical, singing, dancing, quasi-bohemians. It was fashionable to weave his sayings into songs: in one popular composition Raisa Gorbachev's voice says thoughtfully, "Happiness exists; it can't be otherwise," and Gorbachev answers, "I found it."

In the 1996 election, 1.5% of the electorate voted for him. That's about 1.5 million people. I think about those people, I wonder who they are. But I'll never know. The press hysteria before the election was extraordinary. Ordinary people no longer trusted or respected the moribund Yeltsin, but many were afraid of the communists and Gennadi Zyuganov, so the campaign was carried out under the slogan the lesser of two evils or better dead than red. All my friends either voted for Yeltsin, sighing and chanting the sacred phrases, or, overcome by apathy or revulsion, didn't

vote at all. I asked everyone, "Why not vote for Gorbachev?" "He doesn't have a chance," was the answer. "I would, but others won't, and Zyuganov will be elected as a result," some said. This, at least, was a pragmatic approach. But it turns out that there were 1.5 million dreamers, people who hadn't forgotten that bright if short period of time when the chains fell one after another, when every day brought greater freedom and hope, when life acquired meaning and prospects, when, it even seemed, people loved one another and felt that a general reconciliation was possible.

Raisa, We Loved You

By Anatole Kaletsky (The Times)

She was an enigma to the end, but she was the face of a more hopeful Russia, says Anatole Kaletsky

As Russia descends into the sewers of history under the tottering, venal leadership of Boris Yeltsin, the death of Raisa Gorbachev should remind us that, even in the tragic history of this benighted country, there have been fleeting moments of enlightenment and hope.

The outlook for Russia – as a society, an economy and certainly as a world power – may seem as dark today as ever in its history. Yet ten years ago, when Mikhail Gorbachev was touring the world as the first-ever Russian leader committed to freedom, democracy and human rights, Russia's hopes seemed brighter than at any time in a thousand years. During this brief Russian renaissance, Raisa Gorbachev's presence at her husband's side was seen, especially overseas, as a symbol of the Soviet leader's sincerity and good faith. While little was known of Mrs Gorbachev's personal political opinions, her obvious intelligence, her interest in foreign cultures and her Western-style good looks, turned her into a beacon of humanity in the cruel, featureless sea of impassive, pasty-faced Soviet apparatchiks.

Until Mrs Gorbachev's untimely death, it was enough to compare her lively, curious face with the expressionless mask of the heavily sedated President Yeltsin to see how far Russia has regressed since the 1991 coup. It seems appropriate, therefore, to mark Mrs Gorbachev's funeral, which takes place in Moscow this morning, not by discussing her own or her husband's achievements, but by reflecting on what happened to Russia after they were swept from power.

Let me begin on a personal note, by admitting that I am a shameless Gorbachev admirer. Having been born in the Soviet Union and having heard from my parents about the

many friends, relatives and neighbours they lost in Stalin's purges, I had a recurring dream ever since I was a child. It was about a kind of saviour who would suddenly descend on Russia and free it from the Communist terror. Ironically, the picture in my dream was often reminiscent of the scene when Lenin arrives at Finland Station in Eisenstein's film *October.* I saw Gorbachev for the first time in 1988, when he came to the UN to announce the first Soviet military withdrawal from Eastern Europe and promise that the Soviet Union would recognise the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Most people were deeply sceptical about his motivations, but I felt that this was a truly historic moment. My first son, who was born three days after Gorbachev's UN speech, was named Misha partly in honour of this event.

For the next few years, I naturally still harboured serious doubts about the sincerity of Gorbachev's liberalisation and the durability of the political reforms he had introduced. These were put to rest by another experience that I shall never forget. Returning to Moscow in the spring of 1990, for the first time since my childhood, I turned on the television in my hotel room and saw a broadcast of a parliamentary debate. The speaker was a priest who declared himself to be a member of something called the Democratic Christian Party.

He launched into a fervent diatribe against Communists of all shades and stripes. He described graphically the horrors perpetrated in his region by Stalin and insisted that all members of the Communist Party must accept personal responsibility for these. He demanded that all Communists should be expelled from the parliament and be banned from all positions of authority. He denounced Gorbachev by name as a criminal and concluded: "Now let him pay the ultimate penalty for his crimes."

In Britain or America, almost every sentence of this speech would have been ruled wildly out of order under the rules of Congress or the House of Commons. Yet the delegates in the Russian parliament listened quietly and responded at the end with polite applause. I reflected on the state of mind

of the average Soviet citizen who might see this provocative and slanderous speech casually broadcast on state television. It struck me that many Russians would despise Gorbachev for his weakness, rather than admiring him for his courage. But it also struck me that glasnost really was a political revolution that could never be turned back. Gorbachev had let the genie of free expression out of its bottle. It would now take a repression of almost inconceivable ruthlessness – and totally unimaginable efficiency – to turn Russia back into a totalitarian state.

As I look back today on events since Gorbachev's departure, that conclusion seems right, even though Russia has made almost no progress since 1991 towards establishing a genuine law-governed democracy. The State is in the pockets of a corrupt and lawless clique of business "oligarchs" and Yeltsin courtiers. The press and broadcast media, largely controlled by the same business interests, are probably less free today than in the waning days of the Soviet regime. Yet Russia is still more or less a free country – and it is very likely to remain largely free in the coming years, whatever happens to the economy and almost whoever wins the battle over Yeltsin's succession.

What, then, went wrong after Gorbachev? While there has been so little political progress, the Russian economy has been completely transformed from a communist to a market system. And yet Russia's economic degeneration has horrified both the Russian people and the world at large. To put these observations together, the facile conclusion is that Russia moved too quickly and recklessly into economic reform after Gorbachev.

This may be partly right. Certainly Yeltsin's recklessness and corruption have been partly responsible for Russia's economic troubles, but the problems go deeper than that. To reread Gorbachev's own account of his political and economic project in his memoirs, published in 1995, it is clear that Gorbachev never really understood what he himself meant when he called for a programme of "radical economic reform" at

the XXVIIth Communist Party Congress in early 1986. His approach to economics remained, to the end, that of a Communist bureaucrat. His book describes in mind-numbing detail the endless battles and negotiations over the drafts of the multitude of reform programmes presented to the Communist Party and the Supreme Soviet. But it hardly discusses at all the real economic issues that had to be resolved – how to achieve a gradual liberalisation of prices, how to reform the monetary system and control inflation, how to rebuild an honest and efficient state bureaucracy, how to establish a properly functioning tax and social security system, how to transfer state property into private hands.

The substance of such issues seemed to be of little interest to Gorbachev. But Yeltsin has given them even less attention. Both leaders have casually delegated such dull matters of detail to professors and "specialists", while they concentrated on the serious business of drafting programmes, speeches and decrees. Yet it is in creating the institutional and legal foundations of a real market economy that Russia now faces the greatest challenges from vested interests – and now poses the greatest demands for political leadership. Gorbachev, for all his political achievements, was probably unable to understand these economic challenges. Yeltsin was much worse, simply abdicating responsibility for economic policy to his revolving-door governments and selling the State to his supporters.

Sooner or later, Russia may get a government which is as committed to sound economic management as Gorbachev's was to political liberalisation. If and when that happens, the world may be surprised by Russia's ability to catch up with Western civilisation in the economic, as well as the political, sphere. With luck, this transformation could begin as soon as Boris Yeltsin is swept from power by a more responsible government. How sad that Raisa Gorbachev will not be able to see her husband's achievements finally bearing fruit.

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