

On the day Russians buried their leader

Mrs T MEETS Mr G!

One hour of talking

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opens way for U.S.

By CHRISTOPHER POTTER

PREMIER Margaret Thatcher last night gave the West's peace initiative a big push when she met Russian supremo Mikhail Gorbachev for nearly an hour.

This was twice as long as diplomats expected, and Mrs Thatcher emphasised that both she and President Reagan are determined to see the eventual phasing out of nuclear weapons.

She later told the world's press in Moscow: "I now look forward to

building the basis of a frank and good relationship with Mr Gorbachev with the aim of achieving a safe and a secure new world."

With these words Mrs Thatcher buried the Iron Lady tag the Kremlin hurled at her when she became Premier in 1979. Underlining her new role as international peacemaker, Mrs Thatcher declared:

☉ If you look at some of the speeches which Mr Gorbachev and Mr Reagan have made you will find that their objectives are the same—the elimination of nuclear weapons.

There is no wish for superiority on either side but mutual respect and a sincere wish for mutual security.

But at the same time she insisted that nuclear weapons could be scrapped only by both sides at the same time.

Warm

The Russians, who also called in Foreign Minister Gromyko for the meeting were clearly impressed by the British leader.

PRESIDENT Reagan yesterday offered the Russians talks with "no strings attached."

The offer was passed to Mr Gorbachev by Vice-President George Bush.

Mr Reagan is hoping to arrange a meeting in the U.S. this year—possibly as early as June or July.

Seizing on the sudden turnover of power in Moscow, the President has removed virtually all conditions to a summit.

Warmongers? Not us

RUSSIA'S new leader Mikhail Gorbachev yesterday offered peace overtures to the West.

He said the Soviet Union was ready to "maintain good neighbourly relations with all countries on the basis of peaceful co-existence."

Warned

He added: "The Soviet Union has never threatened anyone and will not threaten anyone."

But he warned: "No

says Mik

one will ever succeed in threatening us."

Mr Gorbachev's pledge came as former President Konstantin Chernenko was buried in a hero's grave next to the Kremlin.

Chernenko's grief-stricken widow Anna stood by the open coffin, tearfully stroking his head.

Then she was led away sobbing as it was lowered into the ground.



GREETINGS . . . new Russian leader Mikhail Gorbachev gives Mrs Thatcher a warm handshake before their meeting in Moscow yesterday.