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MY TELNO 810: CPSU CONFERENCE: CALL ON DOBRYNIN

SUMMARY

1. AN APPARENTLY FRANK ACCOUNT BY DOBRYNIN ON THE PROCEDURES ENVISAGED FOR ELECTIONS PRIOR TO THE PARTY CONFERENCE AND FOR THE CONDUCT OF THE CONFERENCE ITSELF. DOBRYNIN AT PAINS TO DISMISS SPECULATION THAT THE CONFERENCE COULD POSE ANY THREAT TO GORBACHEV'S POSITION.

DETAIL

2. DOBRYNIN RECEIVED ME FOR ONE HOUR ON 18 MAY (TETE A TETE, AT HIS INSISTENCE). MY MAIN PURPOSE IN CALLING ON HIM WAS TO ELICIT AN AUTHORITATIVE PREVIEW OF THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE 19TH PARTY CONFERENCE AT THE END OF JUNE, GIVEN THE ABSENCE OF ANY COHERENT INFORMATION IN THE SOVIET MEDIA ON THE SUBJECT.

3. ON THE ELECTION OF DELEGATES TO THE CONFERENCE, DUE TO BE COMPLETED BY THE END OF MAY, DOBRYNIN SAID THAT EACH REGIONAL PARTY COMMITTEE (OBKOM) HAD BEEN ALLOCATED A QUOTA OF DELEGATES RELATED TO THE NUMBER OF PARTY MEMBERS IN THE REGION CONCERNED. THE OBKOMS WOULD PREPARE LISTS OF CANDIDATES, USUALLY IN EXCESS OF THE QUOTA, WHICH WOULD THEN BE DISCUSSED AT MEETINGS UNDER OBKOM AUSPICES, TO WHICH NON-PARTY INDIVIDUALS WOULD BE ADMITTED BUT WITHOUT VOTING RIGHTS. EACH NAME ON THE OBKOM LIST WOULD BE SUBMITTED INDIVIDUALLY TO THE MEETING FOR APPROVAL, COMMENT OR REJECTION. IT WOULD BE OPEN TO RANK AND FILE PARTY MEMBERS TO PROPOSE ADDITIONS TO THE LIST AS WELL AS DELETIONS FROM IT. NON-PARTY ATTENDERS WOULD BE FREE TO COMMENT ON THE CANDIDATES. WHEN EVERY MEMBER ON THE LIST, AND NAMES ADDED TO IT, HAD BEEN DISCUSSED, A VOTE WOULD BE TAKEN, BY SECRET BALLOT, ON EACH CANDIDATE. THE OBKOM'S DELEGATION TO THE CONFERENCE WOULD CONSIST OF THE NUMBER OF CANDIDATES EQUIVALENT TO ITS QUOTA WHO HAD OBTAINED THE MOST VOTES FROM THE MEETING.

4. DOBRYNIN ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THIS PROCEDURE REPRESENTED SOME ADVANCE, IN TERMS OF 'DEMOCRATISATION', ON THE PROCEDURES WHICH WERE IN FORCE AT THE TIME OF THE ELECTIONS TO THE 27TH PARTY CONGRESS IN 1987. ODKOMS WOULD HAVE LESS DIRECT CONTROL OVER THE FINAL COMPOSITION OF THE LISTS OF CANDIDATES. THIS, AND THE OPPORTUNITY FOR NON-PARTY INDIVIDUALS TO COMMENT, SHOULD HELP TO GIVE THE CONFERENCE AS A WHOLE A FIRMLY PRO-PERESTROIKA COMPLEXION.

5. DOBRYNIN SAID THAT THE AGENDA FOR THE CONFERENCE WOULD BE DETERMINED BY THE 'THESES' AGREED IN ADVANCE BY THE POLITBURO, WHICH WOULD PROBABLY (BUT NOT YET CERTAINLY) BE PUBLISHED BEFORE THE CONFERENCE TOOK PLACE. IT WOULD NOT, THEREFORE, BE NECESSARY TO HOLD A PLENUM OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE PRIOR TO THE CONFERENCE. THE CONFERENCE WOULD LAST FOR FOUR, OR POSSIBLY FIVE, DAYS. ITS WORK WOULD BE DIVIDED BETWEEN TWO BROAD THEMES: PROGRESS OF PERESTROIKA, AND OF THE 12TH FIVE YEAR PLAN IN PARTICULAR, AND THE DEMOCRATISATION OF SOVIET SOCIETY AND OF THE PARTY. THE THRUST OF THE DRIVE FOR GREATER 'DEMOCRATISATION' WOULD BE THE TRANSFER OF A WIDE RANGE OF ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES FROM THE LOCAL PARTY APPARATS TO THE LOCAL SOVIETS, IN ORDER TO REDUCE THE EXTENT TO WHICH PARTY ORGANS WERE INVOLVED IN THE DAY TO DAY RUNNING OF THEIR LOCALITIES. THERE WAS UNLIKELY TO BE MUCH, IF ANY, OPPOSITION TO THIS TREND: MOST PARTY OFFICIALS WOULD BE ONLY TOO GLAD TO HIVE OFF SOME OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE CHORES WHICH HAD BEEN LAID AT THEIR DOOR OVER THE YEARS.

6. THE CONFERENCE WOULD ADOPT RESOLUTIONS BUT COULD NOT USURP THE FUNCTIONS EITHER OF THE SUPREME SOVIET OR OF A PARTY CONGRESS. RESOLUTIONS CONCERNING THE ECONOMY OR THE SOVIETS WOULD BE REMITTED TO THE SUPREME SOVIET FOR CONSIDERATION AND EVENTUAL TRANSLATION INTO LAW. RESOLUTIONS CONCERNING THE PARTY, EG ON THE INTRODUCTION OF A MAXIMUM AGE UP TO WHICH, AND THE LENGTH OF TIME FOR WHICH, PARTY OFFICES COULD BE HELD, WOULD BE REMITTED TO THE NEXT PARTY CONGRESS (IN TWO AND HALF YEARS TIME). ONLY THE PARTY CONGRESS COULD REVISE THE PARTY STATUTES: THE BUILT-IN TIME LAG WHICH THIS IMPLIED WOULD SERVE TO REDUCE ANY POTENTIAL OPPOSITION TO RESOLUTIONS BY THOSE PARTY MEMBERS WHO MIGHT BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY THEM.

7. IN THEORY, THE PARTY CONFERENCE WOULD HAVE THE POWER TO EFFECT PERSONNEL CHANGES, EG IN THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE. BUT DOBRYNIN STRESSED THAT AT THE FORTHCOMING CONFERENCE SUCH CHANGES WOULD

BE MINIMAL AND INSIGNIFICANT: 'A FEW' MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE MIGHT RETIRE AND BE REPLACED BY EXISTING CANDIDATE MEMBERS. NEW ELECTIONS, THEREFORE, WERE LIKELY TO BE CONFINED TO A FEW NEW CANDIDATE MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE. SPECULATION CONCERNING MORE DRAMATIC CHANGES WAS VERY WIDE OF THE MARK.

8. THE CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE OF PRICE REFORM WAS UNLIKELY TO BE ADDRESSED BY THE CONFERENCE. A SPECIAL PARTY COMMITTEE WAS ALREADY WORKING ON THE PROBLEM AND ITS RECOMMENDATIONS WOULD, IN DUE COURSE, BE PUBLISHED FOR 'PUBLIC DISCUSSION'. THE MATTER WOULD THEN BE REFERRED TO A SPECIALLY CONVENED CENTRAL COMMITTEE PLENUM.

9. THE NATIONALITIES PROBLEM, ON THE OTHER HAND, WAS LIKELY TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE CONFERENCE AND THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE PLENUM ALREADY DESIGNATED TO CONSIDER THE ISSUE WOULD TAKE ACCOUNT OF VIEWS EXPRESSED AT THE CONFERENCE (WE HAVE HEARD SEPARATELY THAT THIS PLENUM IS LIKELY TO TAKE PLACE NEXT AUTUMN).

COMMENT

10. THE RECURRENT THEME IN THE REPLIES WHICH DOBRYNIN GAVE TO THE QUESTIONS I PUT TO HIM WAS THAT BY NO STRETCH OF THE IMAGINATION COULD THE FORTHCOMING PARTY CONFERENCE POSE ANY KIND OF THREAT TO GORBACHEV. THE ISSUES ADDRESSED BY THE CONFERENCE WOULD BE ONES ON WHICH THERE WAS ALREADY AN OVERWHELMING CONSENSUS WITHIN THE PARTY (THE IMPLICATION WAS THAT THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES, SUCH AS PRICE REFORM, WOULD BE KEPT OF THE CONFERENCE AGENDA ON ONE PRETEXT OR ANOTHER). DOBRYNIN SEEMED ENTIRELY CONFIDENT THAT THE ELECTION PROCEDURES WOULD MORE OR LESS AUTOMATICALLY PRODUCE THE KIND OF DELEGATES ON WHOSE SUPPORT GORBACHEV COULD RELY (ALTHOUGH THIS IS NOT, I THINK, SELF-EVIDENT FROM THE ACCOUNT WHICH HE GAVE ME). WHEN I ASKED DOBRYNIN WHETHER, IN HIS VIEW, WESTERN COMMENTATORS HAD BEEN TAKING AN OVER-DRAMATIC VIEW OF THE CONFERENCE, DOBRYNIN SAID THAT IT WOULD BE A DRAMATIC OCCASION IN TERMS OF ITS IMPORTANCE TO THE CONTINUATION OF PERESTROIKA, BY RE-AFFIRMING AND FILLING OUT THE AGENDA OF REFORM: BUT THAT IT WOULD NOT BE DRAMATIC IN TERMS OF CLASHES OF OPINION OR COMPETITION FOR INFLUENCE WITHIN THE PARTY. || ←

11. ALTHOUGH IT WOULD HAVE BEEN SURPRISING IF DOBRYNIN HAD TAKEN A DIFFERENT LINE, I AM INCLINED TO BELIEVE THAT HIS CONFIDENCE IN GORBACHEV'S ABILITY TO MANAGE THE CONFERENCE IS JUSTIFIED.

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HOWEVER, IF DOBRYNIN IS CORRECT, AS HE PROBABLY IS, IN FORECASTING ONLY VERY MINIMAL PERSONNEL CHANGES, THIS MAY MEAN THAT GORBACHEV HAS DECIDED AGAINST ATTEMPTING TO BRING ABOUT THE MORE AMBITIOUS CHANGES WHICH I AM SURE HE WOULD IDEALLY LIKE TO MAKE, PARTICULARLY IN THE COMPOSITION OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE. THIS MORE CAUTIOUS POLICY WOULD BE IN LINE WITH THE TONE OF HIS RECENT SPEECHES (MY TELS NOS 807 AND 840).

12. DOBRYNIN EVIDENTLY ATTRIBUTED MY CALL TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S SUPPOSED PERSONAL INTEREST IN THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE PARTY CONFERENCE FOR GORBACHEV'S FUTURE. HE CONCLUDED BY ASKING ME TO ASSURE MRS THATCHER THAT GORBECHEV WOULD STILL BE IN PLACE WHEN THE CONFERENCE WAS OVER: AND TO CONVEY HIS BEST WISHES TO HER.

13. WHEN WE HAD FINISHED DISCUSSING THE PARTY CONFERENCE, DOBRYNIN MADE SOME POINTS ON ARMS CONTROL, FOR WHICH SEE MY TELNO 859.

CARTLEDGE

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May 11, 1988

PR054E88

Gorbachev Speech at Central Committee of CPSU

Moscow May 10 TASS -As already reported, a meeting with media executives and the heads of ideological institutions and professionals' unions took place at the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on May 7.

Mikhail Gorbachyov said in his opening remarks there:

"We want to devote this meeting to the forthcoming 19th Party Conference. We see that society and the Party have become involved in the process of preparing it. This is why guideposts are needed.

"The press has already introduced relevant rubrics and the debates have, effectively, already got under way - and not only within the Party, but on a nationwide scale as well. I think the mass media have already gained some experience in this respect and some questions have arisen, too."

Many of those attending then expressed their opinions on matters under discussion. In conclusion the meeting was addressed by Gorbachev. He said: "Such meetings are very important to us, to the Central Committee, and it is good that we now have such a tradition. There are at least two points that could be taken up.

"First, the Party's leadership needs to consult you. A policy devoid of a scientific basis is doomed to vacillation and errors. We know this from our own experience. A policy not resting on morality can cause, I think, no less harm. And we are aware as well of what this has led to. This is why this meeting is important to us.

"Second, I hope that the exchange of opinions offers a possibility for you, heads of ideological organizations, journals and newspapers, as well to check your tack and your approaches. For it is common reference points that we all need, especially in the sphere of ideology and consciousness. I think that freedom always goes together, comrades, with increasing responsibility. The editors, the media executives bear vast responsibility at this watershed time when our society has found itself at a very crucial phase in its history. Every editor, of course, needs such contacts, such meetings in order, as they say, to check his watch. This is why I welcome this meeting once again.

"You may rest assured that we take in the entire pluralism of opinions at these meetings with you. After all, it offers food for thought and the basis for understanding things better, for honing ideas and formulating them in order later to realize them in practice. I find it inspiring, for example, that our meetings are growing each time more substantive and the dialogue is getting ever more meaningful and profound. This is understandable, though, as perestroika, too, has scaled new heights and acquired new parametres.

"I said in my opening remarks that we wanted to devote this meeting to the forthcoming 19th Party Conference. Much is expected from this conference in our Party and in our society indeed. Much is expected from our conference also by our foreign friends. Our antagonists are also making their own plans and calculations. This probably explains the tremendous interest in our conference.

"Very many people are anxious about the question of who will be elected to the conference, of who will have the power to decide on vital problems bearing on the fate of our society and of socialism.

"In short, people are showing concern for the destiny of perestroika. And even this by itself is very good.

"The CPSU Central Committee has expressed its opinion on procedures for electing delegates to the conference. Our position is it is committed stalwarts of perestroika, active communists, that should be elected delegates. There must be no more quotas, as was the case in the past, specifying how many factory workers and farmers and how many women are to be elected, among others. The principal political directive is to elect active supporters of perestroika to go to the conference.

"We expressed ourselves for the candidates to be picked out necessarily with the participation of Party organizations and worker collectives and of Party committees at district and city levels, in short, by all the people. Some regional party committees have decided to make the names of the candidates public in the local press even before the plenary meetings that are to elect the delegates, so that they can be publicly discussed. This is just right, in our view. This will make it possible to approach the candidate selection from correct positions.

"The CPSU Central Committee will keep the entire process of electing the body of delegates to the Party Conference in its focus of attention all the time. Some 5,000 delegates will be elected, or the same number that was elected to the 27th Party Congress.

"Comrades, we are positive that the line of the 27th Congress is correct. The three years since the April 1985 Central Committee Plenum have borne out that we have made the right choice.

"How do we define the task for the Conference? What is its concept? The Conference is to make a thorough review of the progress of perestroika and give it a further and strong fillip. The Conference is to create the political, ideological and organizational prerequisites that would not only guarantee the irreversibility of the processes of perestroika and democratization, but also contribute decisively to unfolding these processes and furthering them.

"We have entered, figuratively speaking, the boost phase of perestroika.

And we have been able to foresee that the second stage, the coming two or three years, will be very difficult. Strategy is being transformed into real policy, into real social processes and affecting all sections of society. We knew that we should expect tension and that a new situation would emerge. And still - as was pointed out correctly here - far from everybody has proved prepared for this. It is only natural, comrades, that the load on the Party, on the cadre and on all society is increasing. This is evidenced by broader glasnost and democracy and by deep-going changes in the very basis, in the management system and in every aspect of society's life. It is as if doors had opened for us to a new and unusual environment. And it has proved vast and unfamiliar in many respects. We are covering new ground, like pioneers, and this means that we're making progress. And hence the varied reactions of people to the processes under way.

"We knew: we should be prepared for this. Be prepared to think, act and live in a new manner.

"In the Politburo we have compared notes and concluded that the novel nature of problems and the dimensions of new phenomena and processes at the second stage of perestroika have put the whole Party and its cadre in a new situation. We saw that far from everybody was prepared to view the present situation correctly. We found veritable confusion in the minds of many people - workers, intellectuals and administrators alike. And, let us be blunt, not only on the ground level, but also on the top. So the Politburo decided that the general secretary had to speak on ideological support for the second stage of perestroika. I want to stress that everything that has been said on behalf of the Politburo and won backing at the February Plenum fully retains its significance as reference points today as well.

"I am telling you this because some people have indeed lost their bearings amid all these processes under way. Some people have failed to keep their heads and

panicked. And the panic - and this is very serious - has taken the form of asking: 'Isn't perestroika coming to mean the wrecking and rejection of the values of socialism, isn't it giving rise to alien phenomena, isn't it destabilizing society?'. I'll tell you that all these questions are very serious. And I wouldn't reckon those who have panicked to be irresponsible people or people opposed to perestroika out of hand.

"No, comrades, we should treat this seriously, without falling into another extremity, without branding everybody who has voiced some doubts as an opponent of perestroika. And I am especially against the position of those who have put the 'enemy of perestroika' phrase into circulation in the press.

"What does it mean, comrades? this sounds somehow ominous. This is the same as the allegation which has been floated through Sovetskaya Rossiya that we are being threatened by the descendants of Nepmen and kulaks. Just think of it: 70 years on, they're trying to scare us with the descendants of Nepmen, Trotskyites and Dans. Let's rise to the occasion, comrades.

"Through perestroika, we want to restore Lenin's image of socialism and lead Soviet society to a drastically new level. We should really bring out the humanist potential of socialism - that is the task for perestroika. But this means that at the second stage of perestroika we should see the overriding goal - an updated society and updated relations among people in line with Lenin's ideas.

"We should work towards this end by using methods marked by humanity, trust and respect. This does not mean lack of principle, any eclecticism or reconciling the irreconcilable. No, it doesn't. We should restore the genuine, wonderful meaning of the great word +comrade+, restore the spirit of comradeship in the Party and in society.

"We cannot pursue perestroika, which aims to upgrade socialism to meet the parameters of Lenin's thinking in the interest of the people, by practicing a free-for-all. We aren't after all destroying the social system or changing the forms of

ownership. The Soviets (elected governing councils) will stay put. Listen to Lenin: socialism has to be built with the human material inherited from capitalism. We are effecting perestroika with people born under socialism. So should we renounce part of them, then?

"No, we can't put the question this way. Our slogan is: uniting and rallying society for perestroika. This is the main thing, comrades. When it is essential, we should find out the root causes of these or other negative phenomena. This approach is proof of our confidence in the chosen path, in the chosen aims and in the chosen methods. And we have already identified them. This is precisely what, in my opinion, distinguishes perestroika and makes it strong. We should all think it over in real earnest. This would be useful for us and, most important, simply indispensable, vital for us. I have already said this in a remark here and I want to stress it once more: both the Party is at the service of the people and all the media are at the service of the people.

"It is impossible to write of the people's destiny in a formal, bureaucratic, soulless way. Sometimes a true-to-life picture is presented, but the author writes as if the pain of the people is not sensed. And if there is no awareness of this pain, then epithets and metaphors are used, labels are stuck on, anything. This, I repeat, happens, if the author does not sense the people's pain. And if this sense is present, if you remember your people always, if you write with an anguished heart of the grimmest things, then there will surely emerge something which in the long run will contain a lesson and optimism. For there will be a sense of involvement in the destiny of the people and the care that their life should be better. I am not going to teach you, I simply address your hearts and minds.

"All in all, you, too, should reform. The media are an instrument of perestroika. And in order to be an effective instrument they should undergo restructuring, just like the entire society. We say that there is no monopoly of

criticism, that no zones are denied to criticism. But, hence, the press itself cannot be exempt from criticism. You should pose questions in a serious way, truthfully, in the interests of the people, socialism, restructuring. And in this the press can count on the support of the Party.

"Why is conservatism so tenacious? this is another theme which I would like to discuss with you. What is it that feeds conservatism?"

"I believe that conservatism is the main factor impeding perestroika. Establishing what is it that feeds conservatism should not be avoided as the answer to this question will help the Party and the media to determine correctly the methods of overcoming this phenomenon.

"We must defeat conservatism on the roads of perestroika. Conservatism in part of society is nourished not only by dogmatic mentality, the habit of thinking in stereotypes, the fear of everything new, but also by egoistic interests. As to egoistic interests, this theme is raised by the press. It is shown that perestroika pinches someone and they start resisting, hampering the process of renewal of society. But this is just part of the problem. The main thing for all society is still the need to overcome dogmatic mentality as it is something that a politician, a writer, a scientific worker have. It exists in all who are connected with intellectual activity and this largely determines theoretical analysis, the shaping of politics, etc.

"There are stereotypes of thinking and action and they have a grip on a worker, an intellectual, a politician. This is a serious and profound phenomenon. We are all products of our time. We have conceived perestroika and we also manifest many of the things that inhibit it. To reveal this, comrades, is a very important task of the media and, certainly, of the Party and ideological work. Such a treatment of this subject helps man make a revolution in his own thoughts and determine his stand.

"Indeed, conservatism quite often stems from egoistic interests. But will anyone mount the rostrum now and say he will write in a letter to a newspaper, that

he raises some problem or other in order to save his present positions and preserve what suits him very much? Not at all. His stand will be presented as if he were acting for the benefit of the people, for the sake of socialism. This is something to be seen and understood.

"And, comrades, there is another very important aspect. We often label as a conservative a person who holds his own special point of view. But take a more attentive look and you will realise that he gets into this position for the reason that so far he has not learnt how to work in the new conditions. He just does not know how to work, comrades. This is quite commonplace now. And we see how difficult it is to learn to work in a new way when we have been acting for decades in the framework of methods of the command-and-administer system. Then should these people who have not yet learnt how to work be regarded as adversaries of perestroika, as inveterate conservatives?

"A real process of perestroika is being conducted in society through concrete experience, through debates, comprehension and realisation of this process and changing positions, and taking into consideration the renewal of our society. And these are important things. We give everyone a chance to adjust. We talk about this in conversations, in the press. But sometimes it is reasoned in the following way: everyone has been given three years for perestroika and that is enough. If you have failed to reform, get out. But we, all of us, have not yet reformed. I shall say this outright that we have not yet reformed and are only in course of doing this.

"What is to be done now? What emphasis is to be placed on the Party work, on the work of the media? A correct idea has been expressed here - that though during perestroika much is being done in all directions, the main thing --the life of the people, their wellbeing, their mood, the way they feel -- should not be overlooked, comrades. It is not only material wellbeing, social environment, but also the way people feel, their dignity, that should be taken into consideration.

"The main thing that is to be done in every area, including spiritual, is to overcome alienation which, deplorably, takes place under socialism when it is deformed by authoritarian-bureaucratic aberrations. And it is only on the roads of democracy, glasnost, on the roads of moral purification of our society that alienation, bureaucratism, formalism can be overcome. In this work we are aware of the vigorous involvement of the enhanced political, intellectual, cultural potential of the entire people.

"We also feel the support from our intelligentsia, and this support is growing. How can restructuring be implemented without intelligentsia? The fact is that not only workers and peasants but also our intelligentsia played an important role in what has been achieved.

"An atmosphere that would guarantee the successful holding of the Party Conference should be created in the Party and in society. The merit lies not in being the first to point out some particular fact or event and proclaim this the loudest. What is needed is that the media should raise vital problems. There already exists a history of perestroika, difficult and complicated, which should be revealed. And when we address ourselves to the past, this has the aim of understanding better what we need now so as not to repeat the mistakes of the past.

All this should be done without undue sensationalism. I would like to say that a good sensation for us is the one that our people are waiting for and our adversaries fear. It is the success of perestroika.

"The further development of criticism, the widening of glasnost is a matter of extreme importance. This matter has been resolved. It is sometimes asked what are the limits of criticism and glasnost. We have resolved this matter within the framework of socialist pluralism of opinions. We are for broad development of criticism and glasnost but in the interests of society, of socialism, in the interests of the people. Waging consistently and resolutely the struggle against conservatism,

rooting out everything that hinders the process of perestroika we must no less firmly protect, popularise and uphold everything which promotes perestroika, which is in favour of the country, of the people.

"We need new approaches, new methods, new discoveries in asserting perestroika. Let us recall Lenin's words: Do not try to resolve new problems by old methods. Nothing will come of it. Hence we must conduct the quest for new methods. And we conduct it in every direction -- in the economic area, in the spiritual area, in science, in education. The mass media must help the people master new forms, new methods, new approaches.

At the February Plenary Meeting we set ourselves the task of grasping Lenin's concept of socialist society more profoundly in order to apply it creatively in the present concrete historical conditions. Note, creatively. It was right that when the theme of NEP cropped up, it was said that we cannot copy, cannot repeat precisely the approaches of the past. No, comrades. We must study Lenin's thinking. It always provides many instructive things.

"Consider, for instance, how Lenin acted in suggesting NEP. In the situation when the country was in ruins Lenin's resolute thinking and decisive policy were addressed to realities, based on realities. Therefore not everyone, not even Lenin's closest associates, accepted NEP at once. Lenin was accused of apostasy. It was thought he was pushing the country onto a road leading to ruin. So I say that we should address ourselves to Lenin's thinking instead of copying specific decisions of that period. And there is room for new, off-beat decisions. This is natural. And it sometimes happens with us that as soon as an off-beat decision is made, there is an outcry: 'Help, socialism is in danger, they are spawning private operators!'

"Therefore I repeat that we should grasp Lenin's concept of socialist society in order to apply it creatively and taking into account the present conditions. What is

needed is not just a return to the past. This would be the worst kind of talmudism, dogmatic mentality.

"We should get rid once and for all of the view that socialism means levelling out, negating personality, of the notion of socialism as a certain minimum: the minimum of material benefits, the minimum of justice, the minimum of democracy.

"We have a right to pose the question in the following way – realistically and seriously: with the economic, intellectual and cultural potential accumulated over seven decades of our history, we should implement a contemporary model of society ensuring for all its members civilised living standards and multiform opportunities to meet spiritual and cultural needs, the freedom of choice and expression of opinions. But all this should be implemented in the framework of our socialist choice, in the framework of our socialist democracy and morals. This society will inevitably be more multi-layer, but it will remain socialist and it will not forgo the principles of social justice, comradeship and internationalism in the slightest.

"Why do I mention this? Generally speaking, our entire society is for socialism.

"The point is that we are now faced with the task of the renewal of socialism. All of us, comrades, should realise what socialism is and by what methods it can and must be built, renewed and improved. This is the theme on which one should think and work. We should advance our traditional notions of socialism to the level of contemporary demands, so that they may keep abreast of the present day and the future of science, economic, scientific and technological progress. In short, we should restore the revolutionary character and historic perspective to socialism. Perhaps it is necessary to establish the criteria of socialism for as soon as some advance is made and some new features appear, the question arises: where are we moving, are we not moving away from socialism?

"It is necessary to determine these criteria. What is truly socialist and what is alien to the very idea of socialism? It is necessary to rid socialism of everything pseudosocialist, distorted and deformed in the period of the personality cult, the command system, stagnation, and restore the truly Leninist meaning to socialism. And the role of the media in this cannot be overestimated.

"We need that, without that we cannot go to the Conference. We cannot do that without a clear idea, without drawing a picture, as it were, of the society for which we strive. We certainly must do this work with the greatest responsibility. I will say again: we should look for answers to the objectives of perestroika within the framework of the socialist choice.

"And let no journal, no newspaper urge us onto another path, by referring to the diversity of views.

"Socialism in Lenin's interpretation makes it possible to ensure a pluralism of views, a pluralism of interests and requirements, and to ensure that these interests and requirements are met.

"We are going to the Conference, which means that we must give an account and sum up the results. We must already have more discussions at the Conference on the history of perestroika proper. The accent will be placed on summing up results. And this is to be done from the standpoint of self-criticism: what has been done, and what are our weaknesses?. Then we shall be able to outline the perspectives better. It is necessary that the conference be more businesslike.

"The time has come to lay even greater emphasis on the question of the unity of word and deed, on the decisions taken and the course of their implementation. We have taken very important decisions which will ensure a serious change in the structural policy towards the light and the food industries, towards the social sphere. All this should lead to improving the living standards of the Soviet people. The implementation of the decisions on questions of progress in science and technology,

in the field of machine-building and electronics is designed to ensure an acceleration of our advance, the attainment of new parameters of labour productivity and the quality of products.

"And now on how things stand today. In 1987, our gross national product grew 3.3 per cent. The growth in volume of industrial output was 3.8 per cent.

"Over the three years from 1985 to 1987 the average annual growth rates were: as regards national income -- 3.3 per cent, the gross national product -- 3.9 per cent, industrial output -- 4.2 per cent, the output of consumer goods -- 4.7 per cent. The gross agricultural output in average annual count grew 1.9 per cent, the commissioning of fixed assets -- 3.5 per cent, of housing -- 3.6 per cent.

"We have made progress in the output of commodities, progress has also manifested itself in health protection and public education.

"The creative forces of the society have been set into motion. Positive tendencies are appearing. This is exactly what changes life. And this should effect a change, if we develop these trends in the right way.

"Take, for example, labour productivity. From 1981 to 1984 we obtained 86 per cent of the national income due to it. From 1985 to 1987 -- 96 per cent. In 1987 the whole increase was ensured through labour productivity. In the first quarter of this year labour productivity in industry grew 5.4 per cent, including at enterprises working on the basis of full cost-accounting and self-financing -- 6.6 per cent. In the building industry -- this growth was 8.9 per cent, and of those who work on the basis of full cost-accounting -- 9.8 per cent. This is, comrades, serious progress. If we keep up this trend I believe that many things will then change for the better.

"Here is an interesting fact. In 1985 the renewal of machine-building products was 3 per cent, and in 1987 -- 9.1 per cent. This is a three-fold increase. We set ourselves the aim of achieving the 13 per cent mark. Contract discipline is

heightening. Cost-accounting is beginning to bear fruit there too. The positive trend is making headway, overcoming the natural difficulties involved in transition to cost-accounting, to new economic standards, state quality control and many other things, which fundamentally renew our production field.

"Now what do we eat, what we are short of? Above all meat, fruit and vegetables.

"The situation with foodstuffs is a source of concern for us, of much concern. We should look for more cardinal measures to advance towards resolving that problem faster. It is necessary to stock the shops, public catering, the market and cooperative trade with enough foodstuffs.

"Now about housing. Over the three years ten million families have bettered their housing conditions. This is a considerable growth. We had no growth in housing construction throughout several five-year-plan periods.

"And now about the trade turnover. It has grown 13 per cent. And it is appropriate to note that over the past three years the sale of alcoholic drinks has declined by more than half.

"The growth is evident, but the shortages are evident too. This means, comrades, that we must have by far more of everything, of everything including the services, but the quantities are insufficient. There are enormous potentialities for cooperatives in that field.

"Every year the country's population increases by two and a half million. These dynamics should determine the growth of the rates of production of foods and commodities.

"We are at a difficult stage in the economy, a very difficult one. We are introducing the reform, enhancing state- quality control, mastering cost-accounting. Half the country is run on a cost-accounting basis and the other half not. This is,

indeed, an unusual situation. To rectify the errors a decision is now being prepared on the question of state orders.

"Such, comrades, are the realities of perestroika. I would ask you to show more competence in covering the perestroika processes, whatever fields they may concern. This takes profundity, responsibility and a well-balanced attitude. While criticising conservatism and shortcomings, we should most actively support everything that is progressive.

"In general, comrades, we should raise all these questions both at the stage of preparations and at the Conference itself from positions of principle.

"We have something to tell the Conference, as regards both the results and the further perspectives.

"We should come to the conference with major proposals concerning our society's political system, which is also in need of fundamental restructuring.

"We should comprehend the role of the Party as the political vanguard at the current stage. We do not give up Lenin's concept of the Party as society's political vanguard. We believe that at the stage of perestroika, the Party's role grows still more in the course of perfecting socialist society, in carrying out far-reaching transformations. This means that a science-based policy be outlined on the strength of correct appraisals and forecasts. That necessitates a large amount of ideological and organizational work.

"Only the Party, equipped with the methods of scientific Marxist analysis, can cope with this task. Consequently, far from calling in question the guiding and leading role of the Party, we believe, on the contrary, that we should get a more profound understanding of it. This role should undoubtedly be a different, weightier one, precisely in the terms I am speaking about -- as regards carrying out the functions of the political vanguard.

"In that connection the question arises of dividing the functions between the Party, the Soviets and the economic management bodies. A mixing of the functions resulted in a situation in which the Party took upon itself many economic matters and began resolving specific issues, down to day-to-day ones.

"This brought about a weakening of the functions of the political vanguard. On the other hand, it has resulted in a decline in the responsibility both of the Soviets and of the economic management bodies.

"We should also reappraise the structure of the Party machinery. This will uncover the enormous potentialities inherent in our Party. If we simultaneously with that do everything to ensure that every communist becomes more active, that every primary organization, all our cadres, start working more vigorously, then things will start moving. We are planning to put forward a number of proposals on that score at the Congress.

"And naturally, comrades, in connection with the reappraisal of the functions of the Party as the political vanguard, the role of the Soviets should be understood in a new way. We have to enhance the role of the Soviets, and the significance of the work of the sessions of the Soviets and the commissions of deputies. The activities of the Supreme Soviet should also be reorganized. We should all give adequate thought to this.

"We should arrive at the creation of machinery, permanently functioning and democratic, that would contain everything necessary to ensure the irreversibility of perestroika, the active involvement of the people in it, that would name the most active people for leading offices, be aware of the sentiments and make the necessary corrections in the work. If we fail to do so, comrades, the economic reform will get bogged down as will other processes, too.

"If we take a closer look, we will see that the key to everything is by way of democratisation, by drawing the people into all matters. Therefore the aim of

perestroika is man and the means of perestroika is the mobilisation of human potential. We shall press ahead with perestroika through that and naturally through the cultural field, through strengthening the spirit of the people.

"We must complete the creation of a socialist legal state. So we shall also need a judicial-legal reform. And this will also be formulated as an objective at the conference.

"This is a major turn, comrades. We are now creating the prerequisites upon which our society will function for decades. This determines the measure of our today's responsibility. So when we are told that we are indecisive in something and are reproached for that, we say: 'No' - and once again 'no'. The most costly mistakes are the political ones. The best results are produced by well-prepared political decisions. In general, comrades, we want the 19th All-Union Party Conference to take responsible decisions that will give our perestroika a new, second wind, and open up to our society an even wider road of progress towards democracy, the road of socialism.

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