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10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister

You will want to see this interview with President Gorbachev by *Time Magazine*. There are some fascinating bits.

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Some contradictory views! [initials]

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THE EYE OF THE STORM

By **JOHN KOHAN** MOSCOW

Even by his standards, it was an extraordinary week for the man in the spare, spacious office on the third floor of the Council of Ministers building inside the Kremlin. Any one of the setbacks that befell him between Monday and Friday would have been a severe test of his ingenuity and stamina. His attempt to revive a stagnant economy seemed only to be provoking fresh resistance from populace and parliament alike. Just as the war of nerves between the Kremlin and secessionists in Lithuania entered a new and delicate phase, Mikhail Gorbachev suddenly faced a challenge to his power much closer to home. His only real rival in the turbulent arena of Soviet politics, the maverick former Politburo member Boris Yeltsin, mounted an impressive campaign to become the president of the country's largest and most important republic, the Russian federation.

Nor was all quiet on the international front. With Gorbachev preparing to leave for this week's summit meeting in Washington, his host George Bush indicated that because too many Americans see Gorbachev as the bully of the Baltics, it might be difficult to lift trade restrictions against the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, Gorbachev's Foreign Minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, met with his West German counterpart, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, in Geneva. It was an upbeat meeting except on what may be the single most neuralgic point for Soviet foreign policy: Genscher reiterated that a unified Germany will be a member of NATO.

Despite all these new problems and reminders of old ones, Gorbachev was still trying to convey the impression

Photographs for TIME by David Burnett—Contact Press Images

that he was driving events rather than reacting to them. In one of his boldest political gambles yet, he linked the implementation of economic reform—higher prices, lower state subsidies and the introduction of some free-market mechanisms—to a nationwide referendum. So much, he seemed to be saying, for the twin charges that he is unwilling to submit to genuine democracy and afraid of tough decisions. The immediate response of his fellow citizens was not encouraging. In Moscow and other cities, panicky shoppers stripped stores of what little remained on the shelves. Miners in the Donbass region who struck for three weeks last summer said they would protest the impending price rises and call for a nationwide strike next month. While Gorbachev's critics were puzzling over that ploy, he made a tantalizing new offer to the Lithuanians: their own state in two to three years if they "freeze" their unilateral declaration of independence. Then, when he met with French President François Mitterrand for a tour of the horizon, Gorbachev reiterated his insistence that ending the cold war means retiring NATO.

In the midst of these multiple challenges, Gorbachev met for an hour last Tuesday with five journalists from TIME for his only interview before leaving for the summit. All around the world, and all around the Soviet Union, people may be wondering how long Gorbachev will last, and how he has survived with so many things going so wrong. Those questions, however, were far from his thinking. He was the man at the eye of the storm, supremely confident that he will still be working his will and wit on the world when the thunder and gale-force winds are spent.

Dispensing quickly with protocol, Gorbachev motioned his visitors to join him, along with two aides and an interpreter, in deep-cushioned brown leather chairs ranged around a small oval table of stylishly crafted, elegantly polished black wood. The intimate setting was in marked contrast to the traditional long, rectangular, green baize-covered table at which delegations in Communist countries square off over battlements of bottled mineral water.

Gorbachev was at the top of his form as a master of human interaction. He has elevated eye contact and hand gestures to an art form, using both not just for emphasis but also for nuance: a little wink when he wants his listeners to join him in a smile, a rabbit chop or a wagging finger when he wants them to remember who is boss. His probing, dark brown eyes are constantly scanning his listeners, looking by turns stern, quizzical, amused, playful. When eyes meet, they both challenge and hint at shared confidences. Whatever lies nearby—a fountain pen, a gray glasses case from a Paris optician, his gold-rimmed bifocals—quickly becomes a prop for Gorbachev's one-man show. When the hands are at rest, his thumbs twiddle, not so much in impatience as with excess energy. He modulates his baritone voice for maximum effect, sometimes dropping the volume so that visitors automatically lean toward him. His lilting south Russian intonation softens the harsh edge of a remonstration.

Nearly five years ago, when Gorbachev gave TIME his first face-to-face interview with Western journalists, he had been in office for seven months. Then, he relied extensively on typewritten notes, color-coded in red, blue and green. Last week he spoke extemporaneously on everything from ecology to German unification to the concept of "civil society." He made knowing references to American politics and economics, not always drawing conclusions favorable to his own country. Highlights:

- Like virtually all his fellow citizens, Gorbachev is absorbed by the Soviet Union's domestic problems. He described as a "shift in direction comparable in magnitude to the October Revolution" the package of reform measures that his Prime Minister, Nikolai Ryzhkov, publicly announced two days later. He added, however, that they would not require so many sacrifices as Poland's "shock therapy," which entailed skyrocketing prices and widespread unemployment.
- The only foreign policy issue that Gorbachev wanted to dwell on at any length was German membership in NATO. He asserted, almost pugnaciously, that the issue will be an area of "major disagreement" when he sits down with George Bush in the Oval Office.
- In a thinly veiled jab at West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, Gorbachev said his "biggest concern" in foreign policy was "some politicians who still think about international relations mostly with respect to their own terms of office and electoral ambitions at a time when we are trying to lay down the foundations for a new international community."
- Hinting at the offer he would make later in the week, Gorbachev stressed his commitment to seeking a "political solution" in the Baltics and said there were "new and encouraging signs" of a way to end the crisis. The next day the Lithuanian parliament suspended some of its secessionist legislation, though it stopped short of freezing its March 11 declaration of independence.
- Of all the troubles he faces, Gorbachev said he is most concerned about the growing "split among the supporters of *perestroika*" and the challenge to his authority "from the extreme left" and from "ones who pretend to be populists but who don't really represent the people's interest at all." He clearly had in mind Yeltsin, who was politicking vigorously for the post of the presidency of the Russian federation. Gorbachev lobbied personally on behalf of the federation's current Prime Minister, Alexander Vlasov, and accused Yeltsin of favoring a "collapse" of the Soviet Union. But at the end of the week, Vlasov withdrew his candidacy after a verbal drubbing from speakers at the Russian Congress of People's Deputies. The only serious remaining rival to Yeltsin was Ivan Polozkov, the conservative party boss from Krasnodar who has made no secret of his support for another Gorbachev rival, Yegor Ligachev.

Campaigner Boris Yeltsin pressing the flesh in Red Square

On Saturday, Yeltsin was narrowly ahead of Polozkov in a key round of balloting, but failed to clinch the presidency. More feverish politicking is expected this week. One thing is certain: Gorbachev will continue trying to position himself as the centrist alternative to what he called in the interview "crazies" like Yeltsin on the left and the hard-liners on the right.

With such a cacophony of debate and criticism at home, Gorbachev will undoubtedly appreciate the welcome awaiting him in Washington, Minneapolis and San Francisco. It is one of the many ironies of the Gorbachev phenomenon that he has to travel abroad, to the heart of what his predecessors considered the enemy camp, to hear crowds cheer for him. However, in the interview last week, he seemed in no danger of succumbing to the sour mood of so many of his countrymen. Every bit as significant as what he said was an almost eerie serenity rooted in absolute certitude about his course. "My confidence," he said, "comes from knowing that what we're doing is right and necessary. Otherwise, I wouldn't be able to bear the burden." ■

"I AM AN OPTIMIST"

Expressing impatience toward his critics and advice for foreign heads of state, Gorbachev sees himself as the leader of a new revolution and a visionary for the end of the century

After greeting his visitors from TIME, *Mikhail Gorbachev observed that since he had already prepared written answers to a list of questions submitted in advance, "there's really no need to waste any more time or paper." He gave a hearty laugh, then invited the group to join him at a small oval conference table in the corner of his office and, without ceremony, launched into the subject that is most on his mind these days—the domestic economy.*

I've just come from a meeting of the Presidential Council. We were discussing radical measures for the reform of our economy. At this point we need only a short period of time, a few months, to take some important steps that, in essence, will mean the transition to a regulated market economy. In Russian that word, regulated, is difficult to pronounce. It's even more difficult to accomplish.

In many countries the development of a full-fledged market economy has taken centuries. For us the next year or two will be the most intensive stage of the transition. Shortly, Prime Minister Ryzhkov will report to the Supreme Soviet on the basis of the discussion and analysis that we've just had in the Presidential Council.

To put it briefly, what we're talking about is a shift in direction comparable in magnitude to the October Revolution, because we will be replacing one economic and political model with another.

Often people ask where we are going, whether we are retreating from socialism or moving toward socialism. As we move along this path, our point of departure is to make good on the potential of the socialist idea. The very fact that I'm saying this is further proof that I'm a convinced socialist. I think in the questions you sent me, you were probing my ideological positions. Well, I am a communist. I'm sure that answer doesn't make you too enthusiastic, but it shouldn't make you panic either. It's quite normal.

Q. You compare your economic reform to the October Revolution. The revolution came as a great shock to your society.

A. This will be a shock. But not a Polish one.

We have given careful thought about which way to go. One alternative was shock therapy. Instead we have decided to proceed radically, but on the basis of the special characteristics of our economy. Most Western economists believe we're doing the right thing. We can't just follow someone else's model automatically. There was a time when we tried to impose our model on others. It would be a disaster if we just borrowed blindly another country's model. That's why we think we should take a radical path but without shocks.

Q. But you said you were going to accomplish all this in a year or two.

A. That's for the transition. It will take one or two years to introduce the market mechanisms and the infrastructure. But then it will take a long time to develop a real market economy. First we have to adopt and implement various laws on taxes, enterprise, antitrust, credit, finance and social protection—the safety net—all within the context of a market economy.

Q. And private property?

A. Well, life will show us. I wouldn't rule it out. We'll be phasing out state property and establishing shareholder companies, leasehold properties, cooperative enterprises and individual employment. Broadly speaking, self-employed people will include those who work in their own shops or on their own plots of land. In developed Western countries, there are various concepts of a market economy. For example, there is a more liberal approach in the U.S., while in some European countries, such as France and Scandinavia, there is more government regulation; a significant portion of the economy is publicly owned. But even there, everything operates within the framework of a market.

Q. Most Soviet and Western economists warn that you can't have radical reform of the Soviet economy without inflation and unemployment—and probably large amounts of each.

A. I think both things will happen. You should bear in mind that we have quite a few factories in the Soviet Union that are simply inefficient. They're going to have to reorient their production. People will have to be retrained. Many will have to find new occupations. That's why we are establishing a system of social protection that will enable these people to make the transition. In America and other developed Western countries, most people are employed in the services sector, while two-thirds of our people are in the production sector. We've got a lot of work ahead of us to expand jobs in the services sector. We'll be looking at other countries as we decide which way to go. We feel ourselves part of a global civilization, and we want to be organically included in the entire world economically.

At the same time, however, it would be an [environmental] catastrophe if all the countries of the world tried to achieve the standard of living of the U.S. America already consumes a disproportionate percentage of the world's energy resources. That's why I stress the conflict between consumer society and nature.

Q. But it seems that many people in your country are concerned not with the conflict between nature and progress but with the absence of progress itself; they're not sure whether you can deliver on improved living standards.

A. You'd be mistaken if you think people are not troubled by the environment, by the conflict between industry and nature. Their concerns have caused 1,000 factories to be shut down. The result has been the loss of 10 billion rubles' worth of production. Just look at the Congress of the Russian Federation, which is debating the question of sovereignty. Many speakers are defining sovereignty precisely in terms of how most efficiently to use the resources of the republic.

Of course you're right that technological progress has stimulated the search for new forms of economic management and organization. The old system rejected technological achievement. Now, by making the transition to market mechanisms, we're going to adopt state programs that stimulate science and education, and we're also going to convert our defense industries in a way that shifts our society onto the path of scientific and economic progress.

Perestroika has already awakened our people. They've changed. We have a different society now. We will never slip backward. There's still a question of whether the process will go slower or faster, whether it will be more or less painful. But we will certainly keep moving ahead. There might be certain zigzags along the way. That's unavoidable when a country is undergoing major changes. But the fact remains that this change, *perestroika,* is a fitting conclusion to the 20th century. It is an event that has engaged not only the Soviet people but people throughout the world, including those from societies quite different from ours.

From a strategic standpoint, I'm pleased with what we have accomplished. We've given a powerful impetus to the process of new political thinking both within the Soviet Union and around the world. Of course there are a lot of problems that are cause for concern. In domestic affairs, we're troubled by socioeconomic tensions that can be exploited by both the extreme left and the extreme right. People with their own agendas and ambitions are trying to mislead our society.

"*Perestroika* has already awakened our people. They've changed. We have a different society now. We will never slip backward. We will keep moving ahead."

In foreign policy, our biggest concern is with some politicians who still think about international relations mostly with respect to their own terms of office and electoral ambitions at a time when we are trying to lay the foundations for a new international community. Such politicians look for partners who have the same incorrect approach. If people don't understand what's most important, then there can be no genuine international cooperation.

Q. You say there is a danger of these concerns' being exploited both from the right and from the left. Which is the greater danger?

A. The biggest danger would be a split among the supporters of *perestroika*. We've got to solidify the main trend. We understand those whom we call healthy conservatives, who support a commonsense approach. We have to take into account their doubts and concerns. We invite their cooperation. On the left too there are people who are worried that *perestroika* is not moving fast enough. Their hopes and concerns are quite normal, and we must take account of them. What is very dangerous is extremism. I'm thinking of the people I call the crazies. These are the ones who pretend to be populists but who don't really represent the people's interests at all.

Q. You used the chilling phrase civil war when you were recently on a visit to the Urals. In what sense does this danger exist, and how can it be averted?

A. I'm glad you asked, because I think the answer will be of interest not just to the readers of TIME but to the Soviet people as well. I have been personally criticized for being too soft or too democratic. I don't know if it's possible to be too democratic, but that's what is sometimes said. And I'm also criticized for being indecisive. Some people are nostalgic for the past. I think we should move along the path we have chosen, which is the path of developing and expanding the processes of democratization and *glasnost*. We are committed to that. We'll be guided on that path by the rule of law. That means there should be one law for everyone; everyone should be equal before the law. Nor should we yield to pressure from those who would like us to tighten the screws, as they put it. Of course we'll find some screws loose, and they will have to be tightened. But repression, witch-hunts, the search for enemies—all that is unacceptable. It's not what we want, and it's not what our people want.

What I have to do is use my personal authority and my political powers as President to speed up our progress toward becoming a state fully governed by the rule of law. That won't be easy. In these politically charged times and in this turbulent society, overburdened as it is with all kinds of problems, some people are trying to fuel the flames and light the fuses. There's no question that these extremists exist. We should not ignore their activities. It's because of them that we've had bloodshed in some parts of our country, particularly in the form of ethnic conflict.

We should take advantage of the chance we have to bring about real change and to build a democratic country based on the rule of law, a real civil society.

"In these politically charged times and in this turbulent society, some people are trying to fuel the flames and light the fuses."

Q. We must ask you about the Baltics, secession and nationalism.

A. As far as separatism is concerned, I've already answered. As for my view on the development of our federation, I'm speaking about the Baltics almost every day. We're seeking a political solution, and we're doing so precisely at this moment. As President, I took an oath of office to uphold the constitution. Certain anticonstitutional developments are taking place. They began just as we started our Congress of People's Deputies. The congress considered the situation, declared the decisions of the Lithuanian parliament illegal and instructed me as President to uphold the constitution. As I said to Senator [George] Mitchell [the majority leader] when he visited me [last April], if an American President had been given that task, he probably would have accomplished it in 24 hours. But it's not like that here. For us the presidency is a new experience.

We really hope to find a solution to this extremely sensitive issue within the framework of our constitution. We are looking for a way to restore constitutional order and authority, and to do so by political means. Let me just stop there, particularly because recently we've seen some new and encouraging signs.

Q. Do you expect a major disagreement with President Bush about a united Germany's being in NATO?

A. I wouldn't say I expect a major disagreement—I'll state for a fact that there will be one. But I do expect the differences to be narrowed as a result of my discussions with President Bush. I hope the character of the relationship I've developed with the President will permit us to move forward rather than backward in our discussions. When two partners meet, each side has its own interests to look after, and the other side must take that into account. The main thing is to find as much harmony as possible between the two sides' positions. If, in any area of Soviet foreign policy, we're doing something that damages the interests of the U.S., then that policy cannot be successful. If, however, we're able to establish a better balance in our relations with the U.S., then both sides can achieve their ends.

In foreign policy too we have to get rid of the command-administrative system [jargon for dictatorial rule]. There's no other choice. It's the imperative of our time.

Q. Looking at the things that have happened in Eastern Europe and in your own country in the past few years, many Americans wonder whether you had any idea of what was going to happen, if it was part of your plans, or whether you have been as surprised by events as we have been.

A. I had an idea—an idea to change our society on the inside and also to change what is going on outside, around our country, and to do so on the basis of new realities. But when people speak to me about various models and timetables, as though all this had happened according to a train schedule, I can only smile. I recently spoke to party members in the electoral district where I was elected to the 28th Party Congress [scheduled to take place this summer]. I told my listeners: If anyone says to you there are simple solutions to our problems, if anyone promises that such a thing exists, then that person is nothing but a con artist; he's out to deceive you. At such turning points in history, all sorts of people come forward in the political, economic and cultural arenas. Some are just a bit strange, while others are downright dangerous. It's important to know which kind you're dealing with. No one will announce that he is out to destroy society or that he is against the interests of the people; he will bare his chest and claim to be marching under the banner of revolution and the people's interests. But people are beginning to see things more clearly. They know who their real friends are. They're giving credit where it's due—to those who are genuinely devoted to *perestroika* and to this tough challenge we face.

This is really a very demanding time for all of us. We have to look at things carefully; we have to analyze where we are and anticipate where we are going as we move forward to a new society.

I am an optimist.

Q. How can you be so relaxed for someone who faces such huge problems?

A. My confidence comes from knowing that what we're doing is right and necessary. Otherwise, I wouldn't be able to bear the burden.

During the interview, Gorbachev handed across the table a typewritten document with his signature on the first page. It contained his dictated answers to these questions submitted several weeks earlier.

Q. Some fear that Newtonian physics governs superpower relations: What goes up must come down. They warn that our countries' interaction has in the past been prone to wild swings between euphoria and depression, cooperation and conflict, thaw and chill. Do you see any such danger? How can we avoid such cycles? How can the recent progress be made permanent?

A. I do not believe that any relentless "law of the cycles" exists in relations between our two countries or in international affairs generally. Everything is in human hands, primarily of course in the hands of policymakers.

In the past, when the entire infrastructure of confrontation—from ideological intransigence to the arms race as the mainstay of security policy—was still intact, fluctuations and even abrupt swings were probably inevitable in our relations.

A return to where we were yesterday is hardly possible now, if only because politicians have become quite well aware of the integrity and interdependence of our world. And also because there is little chance that either side could revive the "enemy image" that used to fuel the cold war and confrontation.

We have come to understand clearly our own best interests and present-day world realities. We have learned too much about each other to be able to revert to old preconceptions and ideological clichés. Besides, if the Soviet Union and the U.S. are to keep their relations on the basis of reason, they simply cannot afford confrontation with each other. Each simply has too many immense, crucial problems, and there are global threats looming over the entire human race.

As President of my country, I obviously protect the interests of the U.S.S.R. Yet I also have concern and respect for the legitimate interests of the U.S. I try to understand what worries the Americans. If both sides take this approach, we will be able to accomplish a great deal and make steady and continuous progress in our relations.

New steps forward are the best guarantee against backsliding—in arms reductions, which still cannot keep pace with political changes; in our cooperation on transnational problems; in economic, scientific, technological and cultural exchanges; and in simple human contacts among people of different generations and occupations.

"If, in any area of Soviet foreign policy, we're doing something that damages the interests of the U.S., then that policy cannot be successful."

Q. What are the most important themes to have emerged in the past several years?

A. Everyone remembers where we stood in the mid-'80s. The arms race was gathering momentum. The nations of the Third World were in a terrible plight. Regional conflicts constantly threatened to get out of control. Enmity kept the world permanently disturbed and waiting for disaster, for global explosions.

So looking back on those years, I see a number of major changes in people's minds and on the political scene.

First, the bankruptcy of militarism and its dangers have become more obvious. Attitudes toward war and military power as instruments of state policy have changed. People have begun to realize that the earth is getting too small for wars and that they have to put an end to the spiraling arms race. The burden of

today's military spending has proved too heavy even for rich nations such as the U.S. To sum up, toward the end of the 1980s there appeared a glimmer of hope that the global political process could be demilitarized.

Second, it was during the 1980s that mankind for the first time seriously began to think in ecological terms. The need for radically reassessing the relationship between mankind and the planet was made manifest by Chernobyl, acid rain, ozone-layer depletion, the greenhouse effect, vanishing forests and freshwater shortages. The ecological movement is now on the rise. Government policies are beginning to change. International ecological cooperation has begun. Yet it will take a tremendous effort to overcome the inertia of mindless devastation of the environment, or even restrain the inertia generated by the industrial era.

Third, and this is related to the first two points, there is a greater awareness now that the countries and peoples of the East, the West, the North and the South—however different their social systems and levels of development, and however dissimilar their cultures, beliefs and ideologies—are parts of a single world and have basic, vital interests in common. These elements of unity and this new social self-awareness form the foundation on which modern world politics should be built. And this is already happening.

Fourth, the 1980s marked a major watershed in the history of the Soviet Union. The logic of life confronted us with the need for profound changes in the context of our socialist choice. Hence our *perestroika*. For our people, progress is inconceivable without the socialist idea. Hence also the powerful tendency toward democratic change here. Hence too the new thinking in foreign policy. Changes inside the U.S.S.R. have had a profound impact on world developments; there is a new international situation, with greater prospects for a period of peace in the development of civilization and vast opportunities for a better life for people everywhere.

We continue to back up our new philosophy with deeds, with action, with the force of example. *Perestroika* and new thinking are inseparable.

Fifth, after the Soviet Union, the democratic tide has swept other countries, especially those with closer ties to us. Naturally, developments took a different course in each of these countries. But they also had a common logic, with a dramatic increase in the social and political activity of citizens seeking to gain genuine control over their lives and the policies of their governments.

Whether these developments are to bring about true progress and real innovation will depend on how firmly we establish in world politics the principles of freedom of choice and the renunciation of force, which does not mean just military force. As far as we in the Soviet Union are concerned, this matter has been settled once and for all. But others still seem to be tempted to resort to old methods and confrontational approaches, where one side's victory is another's defeat.

New thinking does not come easily. It turns out that one must learn it the hard way, as I see both in my own country and in the U.S.

Summarizing the essence of the historic turn that occurred in the 1980s, I would say this: within a very short span of time, people have begun to regain hope for a better future.

Q. More specifically, what are the most important changes since you were last in Washington for your summit meeting with former President Reagan in December 1987?

A. Over these 2½ years, relations between our two countries have changed in a fundamental way. A mutual understanding has emerged that the cold war has become a thing of the past. And a great deal has been done to make that really happen. We have started to build a relationship on a new basis. We've agreed that the disputes between us can be resolved and, furthermore, that those disputes are less significant than the new challenges that confront mankind. As a result, a process of actually reducing nuclear and conventional arms has become possible and is now under way. Regional conflicts have become a subject on which we can work constructively together.

Our ties have grown noticeably in such areas as science, education and culture, and particularly in informal human contacts. We have increased the flow of all kinds of information about each other in both directions, and it is becoming more objective.

It's necessary to protect and augment what has been accomplished in Soviet-U.S. relations. We live in dramatic times. Events can take sharp and unexpected turns. That makes it all the more dangerous to have in our minds the stereotypes of the cold war. Yet those stereotypes are still alive. Let me put it this way: the strength of our relationship is being tested, and it will be tested again in the future. We should keep that in mind.

In my assessment, President Bush and I have come to trust each other more since our discussions at Malta. Contacts that fol-

"I DETEST LIES"

Q. Many have said that you are presiding over the dismantlement of communism. What does it mean to be a communist today, and what will it mean in years to come?

A. I am now, just as I've always been, a convinced communist. It's useless to deny the enormous and unique contribution of Marx, Engels and Lenin to the history of social thought and to modern civilization as a whole. They turned the idea of socialism into a real force for progress. They bear no responsibility for the distortions of that idea that occurred when it was put into practice.

To be communist, as I see it, means to not be afraid of what is new, to reject obedience to any dogma, to think independently, to submit one's thoughts and plans of action to the test of morality and, through political action, to help working people realize their hopes and aspirations and live up to their abilities. I believe that to be a communist today means first of all to be consistently democratic and to put universal human values above everything else. It also means to be able to identify with the vital interests of the people and to understand the importance of the international and global issues that define mankind's common destiny.

At the same time, it is far from harmless to cling to conclusions reached in a different historical period. Having abandoned its political monopoly, the Communist Party should work democratically for the consolidation of our society. It must set its sights on profound, radical changes while still pursuing the socialist goal we've chosen. What I value in Marxist theory is the idea of constant movement and development, and also its rigorous respect for the truth. I detest lies, and I resent anyone who makes one-sided judgments and pretends to have absolute knowledge about what is going to happen and what should be done. The Stalinist model of socialism should not be confused with true socialist theory. As we dismantle the Stalinist system, we are not retreating from socialism but are moving toward it. ■

lowed between the Kremlin and the White House support this conclusion.

Q. How would you judge public support today for what you are trying to do?

A. I have recently been to the Urals, and I have met with working people in Moscow many times in their workplaces, in the streets and at mass gatherings. People speak candidly, critically and sometimes even sharply. But the need for *perestroika* is rarely questioned. People are saying, Don't delay decisions, don't be content with half measures—act pre-emptively. And they're right.

Frankly, as our society was groping for a way out of the twilight of stagnation, it took us some time to become aware of the depths of the crisis. Today everyone is working against the clock. But we have already climbed a long, steep slope since the spring of 1985 [when Gorbachev assumed power]. We did not do all that just to roll downhill again. Those five years have not been lost. We have gained experience; we have new knowledge, which we lacked at the first stage of *perestroika*. We have become wiser, we have learned to take a more reasoned and competent approach to the fundamental tasks of *perestroika*. So some preparatory phase—what I would call a phase of quantitative accumulation—was inevitable and necessary. What's more, it has persuaded us that, in principle, we are on the right track.

New, all-embracing democratic structures are coming to replace the command system in managing the country's affairs. We have made headway in dismantling monopolies both in politics and in the economy. At the party congress we're going to have to discuss quite thoroughly how the party is to act in a situation of real political pluralism, how it is going to fit into a multiparty system. This is going to be an important task, crucial to the future both of the party and of the country.

The Communist Party was not just part of the superstructure of the command system—it was its nerve center. Therefore the party bears the stamp of all the flaws of that system. That's why today it comes in for a lot of sharp criticism, including often unfair attacks. The party has embarked on the path of profound self-reformation. It is making itself much more democratic. This will enable it to be revived as a powerful, organized political force, a force that our society and people need, and that will help to move *perestroika* forward and bring people together. That's particularly important at a time when the decentralization of state control coincides with some centrifugal tendencies.

We have sorted out our economic affairs and seen the depth of the crisis caused by the command system. We have tried some new methods of economic management. A few times, we burned our fingers, but even that has taught us some lessons. We've made our choice, without reservation. A few months, maybe a year, will decide everything. We shall rely on a variety of forms of property and real autonomy, along with entrepreneurial risk and initiative, for the producers. We'll put an end to the rule of government agencies. Once the economic reform really gets under way and millions of people become aware of their places in the new order and pitch in vigorously, they'll become more optimistic and confident of their future.

The Soviet Union is a rich country. It has unique natural resources, a powerful production base, advanced science and a talented people. More radical reform will enable us to address our social problems better, to live up to the expectations of our people and to realize the potential of our country, both for its own welfare and that of the rest of the world.

"For us, NATO is a symbol of the past, a dangerous and confrontational past. And we will never agree to assign it the leading role in a new Europe. I want us to be understood correctly on this."

Q. Would you elaborate for us on your vision of a Soviet federation and how it would be different from the Soviet Union in its present form?

A. Democratization and *glasnost* have led to a rapid process of national revival. In principle, it is a positive process, but it has also brought selfish nationalistic tendencies to the surface. Events in the Baltics, the Caucasus and elsewhere have caused concern abroad as well as within our country. A solution to this truly historic problem can be found, and we are coming closer to it. We still prefer the term union to confederation, although it is certainly true that certain confederative elements might be used.

When the U.S.S.R. was born, there was a heated debate. Lenin was of the view that the Union should be a federation of equal republics, while Stalin in effect favored a unitary state. Lenin's approach was formally adopted in 1922, but in real life things turned out quite differently. It's only now that we are beginning to create a new Union in the original sense of that concept. A truly democratic multinational state and the progress of *perestroika* are mutually interdependent; each depends very much on the other.

You ask how a new Union would differ from what we have now. There should be real sovereignty for the republics in all spheres of their life. That means a degree of freedom that would enable every people to feel that it is in full control of its land, to protect its roots and its language, and to develop its national culture in a comprehensive way. There should be qualitatively new relations between the republics and the center, and also among individual republics.

Q. You are a Russian as well as a Soviet citizen; how does this aspect of your identity and background influence your thinking about the future of your country?

A. My awareness of myself as a Russian and, at the same time, as a Soviet is quite natural for me. This is equally true for millions of my countrymen. I was brought up within Russian culture and Russian traditions, but that just makes it all the easier for me to be an internationalist. That's because Russian culture and what is called "the Russian idea" are remarkably receptive to the national heritage of other peoples. Both in past centuries and in the Soviet period, the Russian people have demonstrated an inclination toward friendship and cooperation with other nations. But our people have also demonstrated their unselfish responsibility for the integrity of the country as a whole, which history has shaped into a multinational entity. Russians have that heritage in their blood, in their genes, regardless of their political views or philosophy.

Many things happened in the past, including distortions of the nationalities policy. There was even imperial oppression of various nationalities as well as attempts to Russify other peoples. But that wasn't the fault of the Russian people themselves. They have a clear conscience. What is more, they often sacrificed what they had in order to help others, particularly smaller peoples.

I might add that the interests of all the peoples of our country are important to me. I cannot conceive of a moral policy without internationalism. I am outraged by any chauvinism, any nationalism, any lack of respect for the character and traditions of any nation.

Q. You have repeatedly called for a "common European home." President Bush calls for a "Europe whole and free." What do you see as the differences—and the similarities—between your view and his?

A. I believe that both phrases strike a similar note. So does President [François] Mitterrand's idea of a European confederation. My own vision comes down to this: not only should military confrontation between the alliances come to an end, but alliance-based coexistence should become a thing of the past. The process of European and global integration, which is already so promising, would gradually create a new economic environment. Politically, we are already entering a new phase that should be characterized by the establishment of permanent security structures instead of NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organization.

I envision Europe as a union of states with common institutions to assure military and environmental security, along with cooperation in science and culture. Each state would retain its local and national character and have the right to protect its special interests without prejudice to others. Borders must remain inviolable, but they should also acquire a new quality of openness, permitting all kinds of cooperation and communication, as long as it is based on equity and mutual respect.

You ask how my approach differs from that of President Bush. Indeed, there are some differences. According to the American scenario, as far as I can tell, NATO—and that means a NATO strengthened by the inclusion of a united Germany—should be the foreman and guarantor in the building of a new European order.

I can understand that Americans and many Europeans have their own perception of this organization. They give it credit for keeping peace throughout the cold war. On that basis, we are being told that the role of NATO, in the new phase as well, will be entirely positive and will even serve the interests of the Soviet Union. But that's just not serious. For our people too, NATO is associated with the cold war—but as an organization designed from the start to be hostile to the Soviet Union, as a force that whipped up the arms race and the danger of war. Regardless of what is being said about NATO now, for us it is a symbol of the past, a dangerous and confrontational past. And we will never agree to assign it the leading role in building a new Europe. I want us to be understood correctly on this.

We have in mind an alternative approach. One key element would be to institutionalize European development and establish totally new structures on a Pan-European basis, naturally with the U.S. and Canada actively involved. Another would be to synchronize the political and disarmament processes with the pace of German unification, or at least link them as closely as possible. Incidentally, in our view, this synchronization is one of the main functions of the "two plus four" mechanism [the current negotiations among the wartime Allies—the U.S., Britain, France and the Soviet Union—plus the two Germanys].

Another point of difference we have with the American viewpoint concerns the issue of foreign military presence in Europe. We are ready to bring our own soldiers home. We're already doing so. The U.S. Administration assumes that Soviet troops on foreign territory are an absolute evil while American troops are always good. Therefore the Americans are looking for any pretext to delay their departure.

Q. Would you elaborate on your view of German unification?

A. We accept that there will be a unified German state in Europe. That is the natural right of the German nation. But let me remind the Germans that the unification of the two Germanys concerns not only them. It is pivotal to the entire European process; it affects the vital interests of many countries in Europe, including the Soviet Union, which sacrificed more than anyone to make sure that war should never again come from German territory. Not even the most sincere assurances given now, in this headlong rush, can substitute for solid international guarantees that Germany will always pursue peaceful development and peaceful policies toward other countries.

One final point on this subject: it sometimes seems to me

AMERICAN HISTORY "IS INSTRUCTIVE"

Q. In your speech before the U.N. General Assembly on Dec. 7, 1988, you singled out the French Revolution and the Russian Revolution for the "powerful impact" they had on "the very nature of history." Quite a few people—and not just Americans—wondered why you omitted mention of the American Revolution.

A. It's not correct to conclude that we underestimate the importance of the American Revolution. The history of the U.S. is studied in our schools and universities. The American struggle for independence, the Civil War against slavery and for the unity of the nation—all this is instructive; it's an important and integral part of world history. Many Russian democrats drew inspiration from the ideals of the American Revolution. Lenin called it one of the few truly democratic revolutions. The American Declaration of Independence is a remarkable document. In the words of Marx, it's the first declaration of human rights. As we build a democratic society based on the rule of law, we study the democratic experience of the American people with interest.

Still, the wellspring of *perestroika* is in our own national soil and our own history. That isn't to deny that some outside factors also provided incentives for *perestroika*. We have rejected once and for all the self-isolation in which we were immersed for so long. ■

that some in the West pretend to be more enthusiastic about German unification than they really are. They even hope to use us to put a brake on unification, so that we will get the blame and end up at loggerheads with the Germans.

Q. In the wake of the elections in Eastern Europe, why do you believe so many citizens who have experienced communism for four decades now seem to be rejecting that philosophy and political system?

A. Well, they don't just "seem" to be rejecting that system—they are rejecting it. But what they are rejecting is the lack of freedom; they're rejecting a system that has done violence to their national character and national rights; they're rejecting ossified ways of thinking. When a society breaks dramatically with the past, when former idols and heroes are overthrown, it's like a dust storm. It's difficult to see what will emerge in the end. I'm convinced that the radical changes in Central and Eastern Europe in no way signal "the collapse of socialism." Genuine socialist values will not sink into oblivion. Even in the present environment of turbulent change they assert their right to exist.

I believe our relations with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe will undoubtedly become richer, more honest and more substantial—to the benefit of us all.

Q. What is your vision of the next century and of the role of the Soviet Union in it?

A. What the 21st century will be like depends on whether we learn the lessons of the 20th century and avoid repeating its worst mistakes. In my view, one of the principal lessons is that the end, no matter how noble and attractive it may seem, never justifies indiscriminate means. On the contrary, the means that we can choose, in the final analysis, either help us to reach our goal, or distort that goal, or lead us in the wrong direction altogether. For example, it would be disastrous if we began to renew our entire system of social relations by acting like a bull in a china shop.

Another lesson we should have learned has to do with the fate of the socialist idea. In the 20th century socialism has gained millions of supporters. It has become a powerful factor in the ideological and political debate, contributing to social and political progress in many countries. Nowhere, however, has the socialist idea been adequately put into practice. Socialism is not an artificial model that can be imposed on society. Any attempt to make people live, so to speak, according to a timetable is not just a utopian fallacy—it can lead to intolerance and violence.

Back at the time of the 1917 Revolution, there was a slogan to the effect that socialism is the vital and creative endeavor of the masses. Only now are we beginning to understand the real meaning of those words. Only through democratization and *glasnost* are we finally involving the individual and his talents in a way that is socially creative.

As we approach the end of the 20th century, we must recognize that we are one civilization. This simple but important truth should tell us a great deal about international politics and international relations. There must be a balance of interests; otherwise new upheavals await us. To accept the idea of mutual security means abandoning the idea of "world leadership," which implies supremacy over others.

Then, too, we should be aware of the contradictory nature of progress and of the conflict between consumerism and nature.

I really don't even want to attempt a detailed forecast of what will happen to the U.S.S.R. Our future will depend on the present; where we end up will depend on how we come through this extremely critical passage that we're making right now as we introduce radical changes in our society, all in the context of world civilization.

We are only now really beginning to feel that *perestroika* is a revolution. That is why some people are beginning to panic. They shout about anarchy; they predict chaos, war, total ruin and so on. They're intellectually unprepared for the kind of major changes that are objectively necessary. That's one reason I have recently stressed the role in *perestroika* of science and education. They can help us change the mentality of society and free ourselves from the grip of outdated, sometimes fundamentally erroneous concepts of economics, politics, culture, morality and philosophy. I'm thinking, for example, about old egalitarian principles that reduce everyone to the same level and old approaches to public wealth that excessively stress the distribution of goods at the expense of other considerations.

No amount of agitation or propaganda can break those shackles. Changing our mentality has turned out to be the greatest problem for *perestroika*.

The Soviet people have the strength to implement *perestroika*. The success of *perestroika* will lead to a fundamentally healthier international environment and therefore to more favorable conditions for every country to address its own problems better.

I believe that in the 21st century the Soviet Union will be a profoundly democratic state, and its economy will form an important and integral part of a new global economy. I see a society that has found a way to harmonize its relations with nature. I see a country on the way to moral stability—a country that has revived its old spiritual values and enriched them with new ones. ■

"I am a communist. I'm sure that answer doesn't make you too enthusiastic, but it shouldn't make you panic either. It's quite normal."