

Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev  
December 7, 1988  
Address to the United Nations General Assembly

Esteemed Mr. President. Esteemed Mr. Secretary General. Distinguished Delegates.

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

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

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

A little more than a year ago, in an article entitled, *Realities and Guarantees of a Secure World*, I set out some ideas on the problems of concern to the United Nations. The time since then has given fresh food for thought.

World developments have indeed come to a crucial point. The role played by the Soviet Union in world affairs is well known and in view of the revolutionary Perestroika underway in our country which contains a tremendous potential for peace and international cooperation, we are now particularly interested in being properly understood.

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

What will mankind be like when we enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century? People are already fascinated by this not too distant future.

We are looking ahead to it with hopes for the best and yet with a feeling of concern.

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

The advent of nuclear weapons was just another tragic reminder of the fundamental nature of that change – a material symbol and expression of absolute military power.

Nuclear weapons at the same time revealed the absolute limits of that power.

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

We are witnessing most profound social change.

Whether in the east or the south, the west or the north hundreds of millions of people, new nations and states, new public movements and ideologies have moved to the forefront of history broad-based and frequently turbulent popular movements have given expression in a multidimensional and contradictory way to a longing for independence, democracy, and social justice.

The idea of democratizing the entire world – the entire world order has become a powerful sociopolitical force.

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

Thanks to the advances in mass media and means of transportation the world seems to have become more visible and tangible. International communication has become easier than ever before.

Today the preservation of any kind of closed society is hardly possible. This calls for a radical review of approaches to the totality of the problems of international cooperation as a major element of universal security.

The world economy is becoming a single organism and no state whatever it's social system or economic status can development normally outside it.

This places on the agenda the need to devise fundamentally new machinery for the functioning of the world economy – a new structure of the international division of labor.

At the same time the growth of the world economy reveals the contradictions and limits inherent in traditional type industrialization.

Its further extension and intensification spell environmental catastrophe but there are still many countries without sufficiently developed industries and some have not yet moved beyond the pre-industrial stage.

One of the major problems is whether the process of their economic growth will follow the old technological patterns or they can join in the search for environmentally clean production.

And there's another problem instead of diminishing the gap between the developed and most of the developing countries is increasing developing into a serious global threat.

Hence the need to begin a search for a fundamentally new type of industrial progress – one which would meet the interests of all peoples and states.

In a word the new realities are changing the entire world situation.

The differences and contradictions inherited from the past are diminishing or being displaced but new ones are emerging.

Some of the past differences and disputes are losing their importance but conflicts of a different kind are taking their place.

Life is making us abandon established stereotypes and outdated views. It is making us discard illusions.

The very concept of the nature and criteria of progress is changing.

It would be naïve to think that the problems plaguing mankind today can be solved with means and methods which were applied or seemed to work in the past.

Indeed mankind has accumulated a wealth of experience in the process of political, economic and social development under highly diverse conditions.

But that experience belongs to the practices and to a world that have become or that are becoming part of the past.

This is one of the signs of the crucial nature of the current phase of history.

The greatest philosophers sought to grasp the laws of social development and find an answer to the main question: How to make man's life happy, just and safe.

Two great revolutions, the French revolution of 1789 and the Russian revolution of 1917, exerted a powerful impact on the very nature of history and radically changed the course of world developments.

Both of them, each in its own way, gave a tremendous impetus to mankind's progress.

To a large extent those two revolutions shaped the way of thinking that is still prevalent in social consciousness. It is the most precious spiritual heritage.

But today we face a different world for which we must seek a different road to the future.

In seeking it we must of course draw upon the accumulated experience and yet be aware of the fundamental differences between the situation yesterday and what we are facing today.

But the novelty of the tasks before us as well as their difficulties goes well beyond that. Today we have entered an era when progress will be shaped by universal human interests.

The awareness of this dictates that world politics too should be guided by the primacy of universal human values.

The history of past centuries and millennia was a history of wars that raged almost everywhere of frequent desperate battles to the point of mutual annihilation.

They grew out of clashes of social and political interests, national enmity, ideological or religious incompatibility. All this did happen.

And even today, many would want these vestiges of the past to be accepted as immutable law.

But concurrently with wars, animosities and divisions among peoples and cultures another trend with equally objective causes was gaining momentum - the process of the emergence of a mutually interrelated and integral world.

Today further world progress is only possible through a search for universal human consensus as we move forward to a new world order.

We have come to a point when the disorderly play of elemental forces leads us into an impasse.

The international community must learn how it can shape and guide developments in such a way as to preserve our civilization to make it safe for all and more conducive to normal life.

We are speaking of cooperation which could be more accurately termed “co-creation” and “co-development”. The formula of development at the expense of others is on the way out.

In the light of existing realities no genuine progress is possible at the expense of the rights and freedoms of individuals and nations or at the expense of nature.

Efforts to solve global problems require a new scope and quality of interaction of states and social political currents regardless of ideological or other differences.

Of course, radical changes and revolutionary transformations will continue to occur within individual countries and social structures. This is how it was and this is how it will be.

But here too, our time marks a change.

Internal transformations can no longer advance their national goals if they develop just along parallel courses with others without making use of the achievements of the outside world and of the potential inherent in equitable cooperation.

In these circumstances, any interference in these internal developments designed to redirect them to someone’s liking would have all the more destructive consequences for establishing a peaceful order.

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

Behind differences in social systems in the way of life and in preferences for certain values stand differing interests, there is no escaping that fact.

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

Pondering all this, one comes to the conclusion that if we are to take into account the lessons of the past and the realities of the present, if we are to recon with the objective logic of world development we must look for ways together to improve the international situation and build a new world.

And if so, we ought to agree on the basic, truly universal prerequisites and principles of such action.

It is obvious for example that the use or threat of force can no longer and must no longer be an instrument of foreign policy.

This applies above all to nuclear arms but that is not the only thing that matters.

All of us and primarily the stronger of us must exercise self-restraint and totally rule out any outward oriented use of force.

This is the first and most important component of a non-violent world as an ideal which we proclaimed together in India in the Delhi Declaration and which we invite you to follow.

After all it is now quite clear that building up military power makes no country omnipotent.

What is more, one-sided reliance on military power ultimately weakens other components of national security.

It is also quite clear to us that the principle of freedom of choice is mandatory.

Its non-recognition is fraught with extremely grave consequences for world peace.

In denying that right to peoples under whatever pretext or rhetorical guise means jeopardizing even the fragile balance that has been attained.

Freedom of choice is a universal principle that should allow of no exceptions.

It was not simply out of good intentions that we came to the conclusion that this principle is absolute.

We were driven to it by an unbiased analysis of the objective trends of today.

More and more characteristic of them is the inclusively multi-optional nature of social development in different countries.

This applies both to the capitalist and to the socialist system.

The diversity of socio-political structures that have grown over the past decades out of national liberation movements also attests to this.

This objective fact calls for respect for the views and positions of others – tolerance, a willingness to perceive something different as not necessarily bad or hostile and an ability to learn to live side-by-side with others while remaining different and not always agreeing with each other.

As the world asserts its diversity attempts to look down on others and to teach them one's own brand of democracy become totally improper to say nothing of the fact that democratic values intended for export often very quickly lose their worth.

What we are talking about therefore is unity in diversity.

If we assert this politically, if we reaffirm our adherence to freedom of choice then there is no room for the view that some live on earth by virtue of divine will while others are here quite by chance.

The time has come to discard such thinking and to shape our policies accordingly.

That would open up prospects for strengthening the unity of the world.

The new phase also requires de-ideologizing relations among states.

We are not abandoning our convictions, our philosophy or traditions. Nor do we urge anyone to abandon theirs.

But neither do we have any intention of being hemmed in by our values. That would result in intellectual impoverishment for it would mean rejecting a powerful source of development - the exchange of everything original that each nation has independently created.

In the course of such exchange let everyone show the advantages of their social system, their way of life, their values and not just by words or propaganda but by real deeds.

That would be fair rivalry of ideologies but it should not be extended to relations among states otherwise we would simply be unable to solve any of the world's problems such as developing wide-ranging, mutually beneficial and equitable cooperation among nations making efficient use of the achievements of scientific and technological revolution, restructuring the world economy and protecting the environment, overcoming backwardness, eliminating hunger, disease, illiteracy and other global scourges.

Nor of course shall we then be able to eliminate the nuclear threat and militarism.

These are our reflections on the patents of world development on the threshold of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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

Could this view be a little too romantic? Are we not overestimating the potential and maturity of the world social consciousness?

We have heard such doubts on such questions both in our country and from some of our western partners.

I'm convinced that we are not floating above reality. Forces have already emerged in the world that in one way or another stimulate the arrival of a period of peace.

The peoples and large sectors of the public do indeed ardently wish for an improvement in the situation.

They want to learn to cooperate.

It is sometimes even amazing how powerful this trend is.

It is also important that it is beginning to shape policies.

Changes in philosophical approaches and in political relations form a solid prerequisite for imparting in line with worldwide objective processes, a powerful impetus to the efforts designed to establish new relations among states.

Even those politicians whose activities used to be geared to the cold war and sometimes linked with its most critical phases are now drawing appropriate conclusions.

Of all people they find it particularly hard to abandon old stereotypes and past practices.

And if even they are changing course, it is clear that when new generations take over, opportunities will increase in number.

In short, the understanding of the need for a period of peace is gaining ground and beginning to prevail.

This has made it possible to take the first real steps in creating a healthier international environment and in disarmament.

What are the practical implications of that?

It would be natural and sensible not to abandon everything positive that has already been accomplished and to build on gains of the past few years on all that we have created working together.

I'm referring to the process of negotiations on nuclear arms, conventional weapons, and chemical weapons and to the search for political approaches to ending regional conflicts.

Of course I am referring above all to political dialogue. A more intense and open dialogue pointed at the very heart of problems instead of confrontation as an exchange of constructive ideas instead of recriminations.

Without political dialogue the process of negotiations cannot advance. We regard prospects for the near and more distant future quite optimistically.

Just look at the changes in our relations with the United States.

Little by little, mutual understanding has started to develop and elements of trust have emerged without which it is very hard to make headway in politics.

In Europe these elements are even more numerous. The Helsinki Process is a great process. I believe it remains fully valid.

It's philosophical, political, practical and other dimensions must all be preserved and enhanced while taking into account new circumstances.

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

I am in favor of a more dynamic and substantive political dialogue.

Our strengthening the political prerequisites needed to improve the international climate that would make it easier to find practical solutions to many problems.

Tough as it may be, this is the road that we must travel.

Everyone should join in the movement towards greater unity of the world.

Today this is particularly important for we are approaching a very important point when we shall have to face the question of how to assure the world solidarity and the stability and dynamism of international relations.

And yet in my talks with foreign government and political leaders with whom I've had over 200 meetings I could sometimes sense their dissatisfaction over the fact that at this crucial time for one reason or another, they sometimes find themselves as it were, on the sidelines of the main issues of world politics.

It is natural and appropriate that no one is willing to resign oneself to that.

If although different, we are indeed part of the same civilization, if we are aware of the interdependence of the contemporary world then this fact must be increasingly present in politics and in practical efforts to harmonize international relations.

Perhaps the term Perestroika would not be quite appropriate in this context but I do call for building new international relations.

I am convinced that our time and the realities of today's world call for internationalizing dialogue and the negotiating process.

This is the main, most general conclusion we have come to in studying global trends that have been gaining momentum in recent years and in participating in world politics.

In this specific historical situation we face the question of a new role for the United Nations.

We feel that states must to some extent review their attitude to the United Nations – this unique instrument without which world politics would be inconceivable today.

The recent re-invigoration of its peace-making role has again demonstrated the United Nations ability to assist its members in coping with the daunting challenges of our time and working to humanize their relations.

Regrettably, shortly after it was established the organization sustained the onslaught of the Cold War.

For many years it was the scene of propaganda battles and continuous political confrontation.

Let historians argue who is more and who is less to blame for this.

What political leaders today need to do is to draw lessons from that chapter in the history of the United Nations which turned out to be at odds with the very meaning and objectives of our organization.

One of the most bitter and important lessons lies in the long list of missed opportunities.

As a result, at a certain point the authority of the United Nations diminished and many of its attempts to act failed.

It is highly significant that the reinvigoration of the role of the United Nations is linked to an improvement of the international climate.

In a way, the United Nations blends together the interests of different states.

It is the only organization capable of merging into a single current their bilateral, regional and global efforts.

New prospects are opening up for it in all areas that fall naturally under its responsibility in the political-military, economic, scientific, technological, environmental and humanitarian areas.

Take for example the problem of development which is a truly universal human problem.

Conditions in which 10's of millions of people live in a number of third world regions are becoming a real threat to all mankind.

No closed entities or even regional communities of states, important as they are – are capable of untangling the main knots that tie up the principle avenues of world economic relations.

North-South, East-West, South-South, South-East, and East-East – what is needed here is joining efforts and taking into account the interests of all groups of countries –something that only this organization, the United Nations can accomplish.

External debt is one of the greatest problems. Let us not forget that in the age of colonialism the developing world at the cost of countless losses and sacrifices financed the prosperity of a large portion of the world community.

The time has come up to make up for the losses that accompanied this historic and tragic contribution to global material progress.

We are convinced that here to, internationalizing our approach shows a way out.

Looking at things realistically, we have to admit that the accumulated debt cannot be repaid or recovered on the original terms.

The Soviet Union is prepared to institute a lengthy moratorium of up to a 100 years on debt servicing by the least developing countries and in quite a few cases to write off the debt all together.

As regards other developing countries, we invite you to consider the following: limiting their official debt servicing payments depending on the economic performance of each of them or granting them a long period of deferral in the repayment of a major portion of their debt supporting the appeal of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development for reducing debts owed to commercial banks; guaranteeing government support for market arrangements to assist in third world debt settlement including the formation of a specialized international agency that would repurchase debts at a discount.

The Soviet Union favors a substantive discussion of ways of settling the debt crisis at multilateral forums including consultations under the auspices of the United Nations among heads of government of debtor and creditor countries.

International economic security is inconceivable unless related not only to disarmament but also to the elimination of the threat to the world's environment.

In a number of regions, the state of the environment is simply frightening.

A conference on the environment within the framework of the United Nation is scheduled for 1992.

We welcome this decision and are working to have this forum produce results that would be commensurate with the scope of the problem but time is running out.

Much is being done in various countries.

Here again I would just like to underscore most emphatically the prospect opening up in the process of disarmament particularly of course nuclear disarmament for environmental revival.

Let us also think about setting up within the framework of the United Nations a center for emergency environmental assistance.

Its function would be promptly to send international groups of experts to areas with badly deteriorating environment.

The Soviet Union is also ready to cooperate in establishing an international space laboratory or manned orbital station designed exclusively for monitoring the state of the environment.

In the general area of space exploration, the outlines of a future space industry are becoming increasingly clear.

The position of the Soviet Union is well known. Activities in outer space must rule out the appearance of weapons there.

Here again there has to be a legal base.

The groundwork for it, the provisions of the 1967 treaty and other agreements are already in place.

However, there is already a strongly felt need to develop an all embracing regime for peaceful work in outer space.

Verification of compliance with that regime would be entrusted to a world space organization we have put forward our proposal to establish on more than one occasion.

We are prepared to incorporate within its system our Krasnoyarsk radar station.

The decision has already been taken to place that radar under the authority of the USSR Academy of Sciences.

Soviet scientists are prepared to receive their foreign colleagues and to discuss with them ways of converting it into an international center for peaceful cooperation by dismantling and refitting certain units and structures and to provide additional equipment.

The entire system could function under the auspices of the United Nations.

The whole world welcomes the efforts of this organization and its Secretary General Mr. Peres de Cuellar and his representatives in untying knots of regional problems.

Allow me to elaborate on this. Paraphrasing the words of the English poet that Hemingway took as an epigraph for his famous novel, I will say this: "the bell of every regional conflict tolls for all of us".

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

The year 1988 has brought a glimmer of hope in this area of our common concerns as well.

This has been felt in almost all regional crises.

On some of them there has been movement.

We welcome it and we did what we could to contribute to it.

I will single out only Afghanistan. The Geneva Accords was fundamental and practical significance has been praised throughout the world provided the possibility for completing the process of settlement even before the end of this year.

That did not happen.

This unfortunate fact reminds us once again of the political, legal and moral significance of the Roman maxim "pacta sunt servanda" – treaties must be observed.

I do not want to use this rostrum for recriminations against anyone.

But it is our view that, within the competence of the United Nations, the General Assembly Resolution adopted last November could be supplemented by some specific measures.

In the words of that resolution, for the urgent achievement of a comprehensive solution by the Afghans themselves of the question of a broad-based government the following should be undertaken:

- \* A complete cease-fire effective everywhere as of Jan. 1, 1989, and the cessation of all offensive operations or shelling, with the opposing Afghan groups retaining, for the duration of negotiations, all territories under their control;

- \* Linked to that, stopping as of the same date any supplies of arms to all belligerents;

- \* For the period of establishing a broad-based government, as provided in the General Assembly resolution, sending to Kabul and other strategic centers of the country a contingent of United Nations peacekeeping forces;

- \* We also request the secretary general to facilitate early implementation of the idea of holding an international conference on the neutrality and demilitarization of Afghanistan.

We shall continue most actively to assist in healing the wounds of the war and are prepared to cooperate in this endeavor both with the United Nations and on a bilateral basis.

We support the proposal to create under the auspices of the United Nations a voluntary international Peace Corps to assist in the revival of Afghanistan. [Arafat]

In the context of the problem of settling regional conflicts, I have to express my opinion on the serious incident that has recently affected the work of this session.

The chairman of an organization which has observer status at the United Nations was not allowed by U.S. authorities to come to New York to address the General Assembly. I am referring to Yasir Arafat.

What is more, this happened at a time when the Palestine Liberation Organization has made a constructive step which facilitates the search for a solution to the Middle East problem with the involvement of the United Nations Security Council.

This happened at a time when a positive trend has become apparent towards a political settlement of other regional conflicts, in many cases with the assistance of the Soviet Union and the United States.

We voice our deep regret over the incident and our solidarity with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the concept of comprehensive international security is based on the principles of the United Nations charter and is predicated on the binding nature of international law for all states.

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

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

The achievement of this goal would be facilitated by an agreement within the United Nations on the uniform understanding of the principles and norms of international law, their codification with due regard for new conditions and the development of legal norms for new areas of cooperation.

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

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

Democratizing international relations may not only [...] and maximum degree of internationalization in the efforts of all members of the world community to solve problems.

It also means humanizing those relations.

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

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

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

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

Before I inform you on what specifically we have undertaken recently in this respect I would like to say the following.

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

The process of perestroika is gaining momentum.

We began with the formulation of the theoretical concept of perestroika.

We had to evaluate the nature and the magnitude of the problems, to understand the lessons of the past and express that in the form of political conclusions and programmes. This was done.

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

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

For our society to participate in efforts to implement the plans of perestroika, it had to be democratized in practice.

Under the sign of democratization, perestroika has now spread to politics, the economy, intellectual life and ideology.

We have initiated a radical economic reform. We have gained experience.

At the start of next year the entire national economy will be redirected to new forms and methods of operation.

This also means profoundly reorganizing relations of production and releasing the tremendous potential inherent in socialist property.

Undertaking such bold revolutionary transformations, we realized that there would be mistakes, and also opposition, that new approaches would generate new problems.

We also foresaw the possibility of slowdowns in some areas.

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

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

Without pausing, we have begun the second stage of this process with the main task of improving the relationship between the center and the republics, harmonizing interethnic relations on the principles of Leninist internationalism that we inherited from the Great Revolution, and at the same time reorganizing the local system of Soviet power.

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

We are full of confidence. We have a theory and a policy, and also the vanguard force of perestroika - the party, which also is restructuring itself in accordance with new tasks and fundamental changes in society as a whole.

What is most important is that all our peoples and all generations of citizens of our great country support perestroika.

We have become deeply involved in building a socialist state based on the rule of law. Work on a series of new laws has been completed or is nearing completion.

Many of them will enter into force as early as in 1989, and we expect them to meet the highest standards from the standpoint of ensuring the rights of the individual.

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

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

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

Naturally this does not apply to those who have committed actual criminal offenses or state crimes such as espionage, sabotage, terrorism, etc., whatever their political or ideological beliefs.

Draft amendments to the penal code have been prepared and are awaiting their turn. Among the articles being revised are those related to capital punishment.

The problem of exit from and entry to our country, including the question of leaving it for family reunification, is being dealt with in a humane spirit. [Helsinki and The Hague]

As you know, one of the reasons for refusal to leave is a person's knowledge of secrets.

Strictly warranted time limitations on the secrecy rule will now be applied.

Every person seeking employment at certain agencies or enterprises will be informed of this rule.

In case of disputes, there is a right of appeal under the law.

This removes from the agenda the problem of the so-called "refuseniks."

We intend to expand the Soviet Union's participation in the United Nations and Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe human rights monitoring arrangements.

We believe that the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice at The Hague as regards the interpretation and implementation of agreements on human rights should be binding on all states.

We regard as part of the Helsinki process the cessation of jamming of all foreign radio broadcasts beamed at the Soviet Union.

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

Now let me turn to the main issue - disarmament, without which none of the problems of the coming century can be solved.

International development and communication have been distorted by the arms race and militarization of thinking.

As you know on January 15, 1986, the Soviet Union put forward a program of building a nuclear weapon-free world translated into actual negotiating positions; it has already produced material results.

Tomorrow marks the first anniversary of the signing of the INF Treaty.

I am therefore particularly pleased to note that the implementation of the treaty – the elimination of missiles is proceeding normally in an atmosphere of trust and business-like work.

A large breach has thus been made in this seemingly unbreakable wall of suspicion and animosity.

We are witnessing the emergence of a new historic reality - a turning away from the principle of super armament to the principle of reasonable defense sufficiency.

We are present at the birth of a new model of ensuring security - not through the buildup of arms as was almost always the case in the past but on the contrary through their reduction on the basis of compromise.

The Soviet leadership has decided to demonstrate once again its readiness to reinforce this healthy process not only by words but also by deeds.

Today, I can report to you that the Soviet Union has taken a decision to reduce its armed forces.

Within the next two years their numerical strength will be reduced by 500,000 men.

The numbers of conventional armaments will also be substantially reduced.

This will be done unilaterally, without relation to the talks on the mandate of the Vienna meeting.

By agreement with our Warsaw Treaty allies, we have decided to withdraw by 1991 six tank divisions from East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, and to disband them.

Assault landing troops and several other formations and units, including assault crossing units with their weapons and combat equipment, will also be withdrawn from the groups of Soviet forces stationed in those countries.

Soviet forces stationed in those countries will be reduced by 50,000 men and their armaments, by 5,000 tanks.

All Soviet divisions remaining, for the time being, in the territory of our allies are being reorganized.

Their structure will be different from what it is now; after a major cutback of their tanks it will become clearly defensive.

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

In total, Soviet armed forces in this part of our country and in the territories of our European allies will be reduced by 10,000 tanks, 8,500 artillery systems and 800 combat aircraft.

Over these two years we intend to reduce significantly our armed forces in the Asian part of our country, too.

By agreement with the government of the Mongolian People's Republic a major portion of Soviet troops temporarily stationed there will return home.

In taking this fundamental decision the Soviet leadership is expressing the will of the people, who have undertaken a profound renewal of their entire socialist society. [The Economy of Disarmament]

We shall maintain our country's defense capability at a level of reasonable and reliable sufficiency so that no one might be tempted to encroach on the security of the Soviet Union and our allies.

By all our activities in favor of demilitarizing international relations, we wish to draw the attention of the international community to yet another pressing problem - the problem of transition from the economy of armaments to the economy of disarmament.

Is conversion of military production a realistic idea? I have already had occasion to speak about this. We think that, indeed, it is realistic.

For its part, the Soviet Union is prepared - in the framework of our economic reform we are ready to draw up and make public our internal plan of conversion;

\* In the course of 1989 to draw up, as an experiment, conversion plans for two or three defense plants;

\* To make public our experience in providing employment for specialists from military industry and in using its equipment, buildings and structures in civilian production.

It is desirable that all states, in the first place major military powers, should submit to the United Nations their national conversion plans.

It would also be useful to set up a group of scientists to undertake a thorough analysis of the problem of conversion as a whole and as applied to individual countries and regions and report to the secretary-general of the United Nations, and, subsequently, to have this matter considered at a session of the General Assembly. [Future Relations With U.S.]

And finally, since I am here on American soil, and also for other obvious reasons, I have to turn to the subject of our relations with this great country.

I had a chance to appreciate the full measure of its hospitality during my memorable visit to Washington exactly a year ago.

The relations between the Soviet Union and the United States of America have a history of five and a half decades.

As the world has changed, so has the nature, role and place of those relations in world politics.

For too long a time they developed along the lines of confrontation and sometimes animosity - either overt or covert.

But in the last few years the entire world has been able to breathe a sigh of relief thanks to the changes for the better in the substance and the atmosphere of the relationship between Moscow and Washington.

No one intends to underestimate the seriousness of our differences and the toughness of outstanding problems.

However, we have already graduated from the primary school of learning to understand each other and seek solutions in both our own and common interests.

The Soviet Union and the United States have built the largest nuclear and missile arsenals.

But it is those two countries that, having become specifically aware of their responsibility, were the first to conclude a treaty on the reduction and physical elimination of a portion of their armaments which posed a threat to both of them and to all others.

Both countries possess the greatest and the most sophisticated military secrets.

But it is those two countries that have laid a basis for and are further developing a system of mutual verification both of the elimination of armaments and of the reduction and prohibition of their production.

It is those two countries that are accumulating the experience for future bilateral and multilateral agreements.

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

All this is our joint investment in a venture of historic importance. We must not lose this investment, or leave it idle. [Looking to the Bush Years]

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

I have in mind, above all, these things:

- \* Consistent movement toward a treaty on 50 percent reductions in strategic offensive arms while preserving the ABM treaty;

- \* Working out a convention on the elimination of chemical weapons - here, as we see it, prerequisites exist to make 1989 a decisive year;

- \* And negotiations on the reduction of conventional arms and armed forces in Europe.

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

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

The Soviet Union highly appreciates the major and original contributions of socialist countries in the process of creating a healthier international environment.

In the course of negotiations we are constantly aware of the presence other major powers both nuclear and non-nuclear.

Many countries including medium size and small countries and of course the non-aligned movement and the intercontinental Group of Six are playing the uniquely important constructive role.

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

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

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

Yes the trend toward disarmament has been given a powerful impetus.

And the process is gaining momentum of its own but it has not yet become irreversible.

Yes, willingness to give up confrontation in favor of dialogue and cooperation is being strongly felt.

But it is still far from becoming a permanent feature in the practice of international relations.

Yes, movement towards a nuclear weapon-free and non-violent world is capable of radically transforming the political and intellectual identity of our planet.

But only the first steps have been taken and even they have been met with mistrust in certain influential quarters and face resistance.

The legacy and inertia of the past continue to be felt.

Profound contradictions and the roots of many conflicts have not disappeared and their remains another fundamental fact which is that a peaceful period will be taking shape within the context of the existence and rivalry of different social and economic and political systems.

However, the thrust of our international efforts and one of the key elements of the new thinking is that this rivalry should be given a quality of reasonable competition with due regard for freedom of choice and a balance of interests.

Then it will become even more useful and productive from the standpoint of global development - otherwise if the arms race as in the past remains its basic component this rivalry will be deadly.

More and more people throughout the world – leaders as well as ordinary people are beginning to understand this.

Esteemed Mr. President; Distinguished Delegates; I conclude my first address to the United Nations with the same feeling that I had when I began it, a feeling of responsibility to my own people and to the world community.

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

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

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

Thank you.