

The following are extracts from the speech made by the Soviet President in accepting the Nobel Peace Prize for 1990 in Oslo yesterday:

PERESTROIKA has now entered its most dramatic phase. During the last six years we have discarded and destroyed much that stood in the way of a renewal and transformation of our society. But when society was given freedom it could not recognise itself, for it had lived too long, as it were, "beyond the looking glass". Contradictions and vices rose to the surface, and even blood has been shed, although we have been able to avoid a bloodbath.

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

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

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

Steering a peaceful course is not easy in a country where generation after generation of people were led to believe that those who have power or force could throw those who dissent or disagree out of politics or even in jail. For centuries all the country's problems used to be finally resolved by violent means.

Our democracy is being born in pain. A political culture is emerging — one that presupposes debate and pluralism, but also legal order and, if democracy is to work, strong government authority based on one law for all. This process is gaining strength. Being resolute in the pursuit of *perestroika*, a subject of much debate these days, must be measured by the commitment to democratic change.

Being resolute does not mean a return to repression, *diktat* or the suppression of rights and freedoms. I will never agree to having our society split once again into Reds and Whites, into those who claim to speak and act "on behalf of the people" and those who are "enemies of the people".

Being resolute today means to act within the framework of political and social pluralism and the rule of law to provide conditions for continued reform and prevent a breakdown of the state and economic collapse, prevent the elements of chaos from becoming catastrophic.

There is already a consensus in our society that we have to move towards a mixed market economy. There are still differences as to how to do it and how fast we should move. Some are in

Kremlin unveils 'fundamentally new phase' in foreign relations

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President Gorbachev addressing the Nobel audience in Oslo yesterday, when he appealed for Western aid Photograph: Wolfgang Rattay/Reuters

favour of rushing through a transitional period as fast as possible, no matter what.

After a time of rampant separatism and euphoria, when almost every village proclaimed sovereignty, a centripetal force is beginning to gather momentum, based on a more sensible view of existing realities and the risks involved.

And this is what counts most now. There is a growing will to achieve consensus, and a growing understanding that we have a state, a country, a

common life. This is what must be preserved first of all. Only then can we afford to start figuring out which party or club to join and what God to worship.

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

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

Recently, we have been seriously rethinking the substance and the role of our economic co-operation with other countries, above all major Western nations. We realise, of course, that we have to carry out measures that would enable us really to open up to the world economy and become its organic part. But at the same time we come to the conclusion that there is a need for a kind of synchronisation of our actions towards that end with those of the Group of Seven and of the European Communities. In other words, we are thinking of a fundamentally new phase in our international co-operation.

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

- Stabilising the democratic process on the basis of a broad social consensus and a new constitutional structure of our Union as a genuine, free, and voluntary federation;

- Intensifying economic reform to establish a mixed-market economy based on a new system of property relations;

- Taking vigorous steps to open the country up to the world economy through rouble convertibility and acceptance of civilised "rules of the game" adopted in the world market, and through membership in the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

These three areas are closely interrelated. Therefore there is a need for discussion in the Group of Seven and in the European Community. We need a joint programme of action to be implemented over a number of years.

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

Clearly, as the Soviet Union proceeds with *perestroika* its contribution to building a new world will become more constructive and significant. What we have done on the basis of new thinking has made it possible to channel international co-operation along new, peaceful lines.

Over these years we have come a long way in the general political co-operation with the West. It stood a difficult test at a time of momentous change in Eastern Europe and of the search for a solution to the German problem. It has withstood the crushing stress of the crisis in the Persian Gulf. There is no doubt that this co-operation, which all of us need, will become more effective and indispensable if our economies become more integrated and start working more-or-less in synchronised rhythm.

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