

A Time for Peace



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THIS book is a collection of statements made between March and October 1985, since my election as General Secretary of the Communist Party Central Committee. Its content represents my own and my colleagues ideas, arising from reflections on the past and the present, a contemplation of the future, and from talks with very different people: factory managers and workers, farmers and scientists, politicians from other countries, my friends, and my critics.

This book naturally reflects this particular historical moment,

which not only prompts, but, at times, dictates a definite approach to problems facing the Soviet Union, as well as ways of seeking their solution. But the present is so packed with events and changes that sometimes even a single day may be equivalent to a whole epoch in terms of the scope of decisions that have to be made and of the significance of what must be accomplished for present and future generations. This is convincingly demonstrated by the experience of any country.

To a considerable extent, this complex decision-making process is also true of the domestic tasks facing our state which command the attention of the Soviet Union's leadership. We have major achievements as well as quite a few unresolved problems, some of which are quite serious. I shall not list them here, as they are dealt with in sufficient detail in this book. I wish to stress only that a country which has set itself the primary task of raising its people's standard of living and quality of life cannot but have a vital stake in peace, in tranquil and normal international affairs, and in mutually advantageous cooperation. Our foreign policy is an organic and logical extension of our domestic policy.

The present-day world situation causes grave anxiety among our people. I believe that these apprehensions are shared by many Americans. Mankind now faces the most crucial choice in civilization's history; a choice that must be made today, before it is too late. It is a choice between further straining international tensions or relaxing them, between escalating the arms race to cosmic propor-

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