

are inextricably linked with political considerations. As in other major problems of life in the country, economics and politics are inseparable from one another. Indeed, a number of scientists and representatives of the public have expressed serious concern and doubt whether our economy can sustain now and in the near term the simultaneous construction of five petrochemical complexes at a total cost of approximately 41 billion rubles, as was originally planned.

Even before the problem was taken up by the Politburo, leading scientists of the USSR Academy of Sciences had expressed their opinion: Vice-Presidents O.M. Nefedov and V.A. Koptug, and Academician-Secretary of the Division of Economics of the USSR Academy of Sciences A.G. Aganbegyan. In a letter addressed to the government, they reported that, gives the present circumstances, the conversion of native hydrocarbons which currently are being burned up, into petrochemical and chemical products would not only be a means of accelerating the growth of the chemical industry nationwide but would also make it possible to economise on such a non-renewable natural resource as petroleum. In addition, these scientists also proposed the construction of only two complexes - one in Tobolsk and one in Surgut - during the 13th Five-Year Plan. In this case, the level of capital investment in basic production would amount to only 5.5 billion rubles, including 2.6 billion rubles in freely convertible currency (joint enterprises are being created). Moreover, it is extremely important that monies totalling 1.9 billion rubles be spent on development of an infra-structure and on solving social problems to improve people's lives. Technical-economic studies of the projects have shown that these monies could be recovered in