

civilization,” and in the event of such a war “there would be neither victors nor vanquished.”⁹⁶

Gorbachev’s language at the Congress was equally strong. He warned that there has been a “qualitative leap in the means of destruction” which “for the first time in history, has ‘endowed’ man with the physical capability to destroy all life on earth.”⁹⁷ He did not envisage any difference in the fate of socialism and capitalism in the event of a nuclear conflict: “Nuclear weapons bear the threat of a hurricane capable of wiping humankind from the face of the earth.”⁹⁸ Given the overriding threat posed by the nuclear danger, as well as other global problems, he called for new joint efforts to save humanity: “The need to accomplish the more urgent tasks common to all mankind should impel them to interaction and should awaken in mankind hitherto unseen powers of self-preservation.”⁹⁹

Gorbachev’s speech to the Congress did not explicitly criticize Brezhnev’s foreign policy, but he did call for new approaches. He stated:

The situation has come to a turning point not only in internal but also in *external* affairs. The changes in current world affairs are so deep and significant that they require a reassessment and a comprehensive analysis of all factors. The situation created by the nuclear confrontation calls for new approaches, methods, and forms of mutual relations between the different social systems, states and regions.¹⁰⁰

In a later passage he also noted: “Continuity in foreign policy has nothing in common with the simple repetition of what has been done, especially in approaches to accumulated problems.”¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ “Programma Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soiuzu,” *Kommunist*, 1986, No. 4, p. 111.

⁹⁷ *Kommunist*, 1986, No. 4, p. 10.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 56.