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In this ominous 1979 report from then-KGB Chairman Yuri Andropov to the Central Committee, Andropov reports on alleged "serious deficiencies" in the construction of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Station. Andropov notes that those failings could "lead to serious consequences." As a result of Andropov's report, the USSR Ministry of Energy and Electrification provided recommendations on remedying the deficiencies and improving control over construction quality. But nothing fundamental was done to make the facility safer.

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Return to the General  
Section of the Central  
Committee of the CPSU

Central Committee of the CPSU

USSR COMMITTEE OF STATE SECURITY [KGB]  
February 21, 1979 No. 346-A  
Moscow

Construction Flaws at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant [AES]

According to data in the possession of the KGB of the USSR, design deviations and violations of construction and assembly technology are occurring at various places in the construction of the second generating unit of the Chernobyl AES, and these could lead to mishaps and accidents.

The structural pillars of the generator room were erected with a deviation of up to 100 mm from the reference axes, and horizontal connections between the pillars are absent in places. Wall panels have been installed with a deviation of up to 150 mm from the axes. The placement of roof plates does not conform to the designer's specifications. Crane tracks and stopways have vertical drops of up to 100 mm and in places a slope of up to 8°.

Deputy head of the Construction Directorate, Comrade V. T. Gora, gave instructions for backfilling the foundation in many places where vertical waterproofing was damaged. Similar violations were permitted in other sections with the knowledge of Comrade V. T. Gora and the head of the construction group, Comrade IU. L. Matveev. Damage to the waterproofing can lead to ground water seepage into the station and radioactive contamination of the environment.

The leadership of the Directorate is not devoting proper attention to the foundation, on which the quality of the construction largely depends. The cement plant operates erratically, and its output is of poor quality. Interruptions were permitted during the pouring of especially heavy concrete causing gaps and layering in the foundation. Access roads to the Chernobyl AES are in urgent need of repair.

Construction of the third high-voltage transmission line is behind schedule, which could limit the capacity utilization of

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the second unit.

As a result of inadequate monitoring of the condition of safety equipment, in the first three quarters of 1978, 170 individuals suffered work-related injuries, with the loss of work time totalling 3,366 worker-days.

The KGB of Ukraine has informed the CPSU Central Committee of these violations. This is for your information.

Chairman of the Committee [KGB] [signed] IU. Andropov  
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USSR MINISTRY OF  
POWER AND ELECTRIFICATION  
(MINENERGO USSR)

Central Committee CPSU

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Minenergo USSR

Central Committee  
of the CPSU  
MAR. 16, 79 07738  
Return to General  
Section of the  
Central Committee

Moscow K-11 A.T. 112604  
3-16-79 No. 1381-2c

No. \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_

Checking the structural condition of the first unit of the Chernobyl AES.

At the instruction of the USSR Minister of Power and Electrification, a commission under the chairmanship of Deputy Minister Comrade F. V. Sapozhnikov was formed to check the quality of construction and assembly work on the first unit of the Chernobyl AES.

The commission visited the site on March 5-6, 1979, and examined the state of the buildings and structures of the first unit of the Chernobyl AES and the notes on the quality of construction and assembly work.

The Commission found that violations of construction technology and design deviations have been documented.

In each specific instance, engineering solutions were adopted (in the construction, the operation, or by the designers) to eliminate deviations and make the structures conform to the specifications of the original design and normative documents.

Some of the measures have been realized; the rest of the work is being completed according to a rigid timetable set by the commission.

At the present time the power station is operating successfully, and there are no hindrances to its further operation.

Taking into account the specifics of nuclear power stations, and attaching primary significance to the reliability and safety of their operations, the USSR Ministry of Power and Electrification has issued an order to enhance monitoring of technical standards observance and the quality of construction and assembly work at all AESs under construction.

A letter of similar content was sent to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine.

Deputy Minister [signed] P. P. Falaleev

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CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE CPSU

Defects in the Construction of the Chernobyl AES

Chairman of the KGB of the USSR, Comrade IU. V. Andropov, reports about the low quality of construction work on various sections of the second unit of the Chernobyl AES of the USSR Ministry of Power and Electrification.

As instructed, Comrade Minister P. S. Neporozhnii has formed a special commission under the leadership of Deputy Minister Comrade Sapozhnikov to examine and carefully analyze the facts cited. The commission visited the site to conduct a thorough investigation of design deviations and to inspect the system of monitoring the quality of construction and assembly work.

It was found that in erecting individual pillars, wall panels, and crane track stopways, there indeed were instances of deviation from the reference axes and substandard construction practices. Most of these deviations were exposed by the design inspectorate of the Gidroproekt Institute and a technical site inspection, and they were documented.

The Chernobyl AES construction directorate along with the design organization and client have adopted coordinated engineering solutions ensuring design reliability and construction quality. Some of the deviations have been

eliminated, and the rest of the measures are being carried out. A timetable under the control of the Ministry leadership has been established to eliminate the noted deficiencies.

The specialists conclude that at present there are no obstacles to the subsequent operation of the Chernobyl AES, and the electric power station is operating reliably.

To raise the quality of construction and assembly work and strengthen control over fire and radiation safety, the Ministry has published instructions stipulating strict verification of the quality of work at AES construction sites by Ministry commissions, enhancing quality inspection laws, training engineers and technicians, strengthening fire-fighting procedures, and monitoring observation of safety regulations.

Head of the Soiuzatomenergo organization, Comrade Nevskii, the director of the Chernobyl AES, Comrade Briukhanov, and the head of the construction directorate, Comrade Kizima, were notified of their personal responsibility for eliminating the noted deficiencies and raising the quality of the work performed.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine has been informed of the measures taken by the ministry.

Head of the Section of Machine Building of the  
Central Committee of the CPSU. [SIGNATURE] (V. Frolov)

March "23", 1979

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