

Government Telegram

To: Secretary of the Security Council of the RF O. I. Lobov

Esteemed Oleg Ivanovich!

I am informing you that according to my information the situation at the Russian Federal Nuclear Center – Arzamas-16 – has sharply deteriorated. The necessary minimum of work in the sphere of nuclear weapons and nuclear technologies is in danger of not being accomplished, including the work on increasing safety of nuclear weapons. The unique experimental base of the institute is on the verge of being totally lost, even while the necessity to maintain and develop it was stipulated by Protocol No. 1 of the Security Council [of the Russian Federation] from January 19, 1994. The reliability and safety of the Russian nuclear arsenal is in danger. The reason for this is the catastrophic decline in real incomes and standard of living of the absolute majority of designers of nuclear weapons, specialists of the highest class and workers, staff of the nuclear center. The directive of the President of Russia, No. 88-RPS from 02.29.1992, establishing the level of priority salaries for specialists of RFNC-VNIIEF corresponding to 14.6 times the minimum wage at the moment of signing the directive [tk: next part of this is unclear] on salaries in the Russian Federation, has not been implemented. Presidential Decrees No. 1850 from 11.06.1993 and No. 2209 from 12.23.1994 are not being complied with; nor is Resolution No. 238 of the Government of the Russian Federation from 03.07.1995 concerning mandatory advance payments for work carried out at especially dangerous industrial sites [tk: rest of sentence unclear] and objects in terms of radiation and nuclear conditions. Appropriated resources are not being delivered as planned. By 06.18.1995, the [Center] received only 50% of the authorized money. They have nothing to pay salaries with for May and no advance payments for June 1995. Nuclear scientists are driven to desperation. Underfinancing of the Center, the psychological depression and social exasperation of the scientists working with nuclear materials has become a factor in the decreasing safety of this especially dangerous industry. The lessons of Chernobyl are not being taken into account. Spontaneous meetings and rallies of the staff have started, at which they adopt appeals addressed to you, demanding to punish those who are responsible for the failure to carry out your orders. It appears that there is a blunt [form of] sabotage against the Presidential decrees and the government resolutions regarding the nuclear centers [tk: does this mean the Finance Min. is doing the sabotage?] on the part of the Finance Ministry of the Russian Federation. I am asking you to look into this and to take measures against those responsible for such a state of affairs in the industry that ensures the security of our state, and the security of Russia.

Chairman of the Subcommittee on the Military-Industrial
Complex of the State Duma of the Russian Federation

S. Sulakshin.

20 June 1995

[Source: National Security Archive Nunn-Lugar Collection, obtained from the State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF)]

Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya for the National Security Archive