Information of the KGB of the Ukrainian SSR for the city of Kiev and the Kiev region on counterintelligence measures at the Chernobyl NPP in November–December 1986

December 23, 1986
Secret

On the situation at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant and its surroundings.

From November 10 to December 21, 1986, the Kiev and Kiev region Department of the Ukrainian State Security Committee for the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant took organizational and practical measures to provide counterintelligence support to the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant and to enterprises and organisations involved in the liquidation of the consequences of the accident.

The work was carried out with the view of uncovering and suppressing possible enemy reconnaissance efforts, ensuring reliable operational control over the radiation situation and its development trends, the state of secrecy and security of the plant and the zone, identifying possible preconditions for an emergency and mass adverse events, providing comprehensive assistance to the Government Commission, the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant administration, and the Combine Production Association in solving the tasks facing them, and implementing preventive and preventive measures.

On December 12, 1986, eight correspondents from the United States, Great Britain, and Japan, who were in Kiev under the auspices of the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, visited the apartments of Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant (CNPP) specialists as scheduled. During their conversations, the foreigners inquired about the radiation situation at the plant and its surroundings, the methods, techniques, and technical means of decontamination, their effectiveness, the organization of rescue operations in the first hours after the accident, the nature of the NPP restoration efforts, and the personnel responsible.

Surveys were conducted about the behaviour and mood of the Pripyat population after the accident, the level of trust in the media, the staff's preparedness for possible similar incidents, and housing and living conditions.

In accordance with the decision of the Authority, on December 17, 1986, a British delegation visited the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant. This delegation included Energy Minister Walker, his assistant, Grant, and the British Ambassador to the USSR, Cartledge. The apartment of V.A. Senchenko, a maintenance worker at the Chernobylenergozashchita construction and assembly department, in Kiev was visited by Potts, deputy editor of the Daily Express, and Dart, assistant to the Energy Minister.

In a conversation with the leadership of the USSR Ministry of Atomic Energy and the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant, Walker expressed interest in the circumstances of the accident and the response to its consequences, the radiation situation, the decontamination of the plant, the return of adjacent territories to economic use, and the measures taken to ensure personnel safety and improve the operational reliability of RBMK reactors. Representatives of the press noted attempts to gather information, primarily on the attitude of the Soviet people toward

the accident and its consequences, and on the organization of monitoring the health of workers in the Chernobyl zone.

The department assisted the plant administration in obtaining a favourable interview from Walker on Ukrainian television. A detailed report on the British delegation's visit to the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant and its visit to Senchenko's apartment was published in our outgoing report No. 6/4–6082 of December 17, 1986.

A preliminary analysis of these meetings between foreigners and Soviet specialists may indicate coordinated actions by enemy intelligence services to legally obtain information about the accident at the nuclear power plant, measures to eliminate its consequences, and the collection of biased materials on the same issues.

The radiation situation in the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant zone has generally improved over the past month. On some days, a slight increase in radiation level was recorded, attributed to wind-blown radioactive dust and ongoing roof cleaning work on Unit 3.

According to the operational headquarters of the USSR Ministry of Defence, the territory contaminated with radioactive substances is currently divided into zones with the following areas and background radiation levels:
– Special Zone, including the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant (CNPP) territory — 65 sq. km, from 300 to 500 µSv/hr;
– Exclusion Zone — 1,320 sq. km, from 20 to 500 µSv/hr;
– Relocation Zone — 2,826 sq. km, from 1 to 50 µSv/hr.
[An inconsistency above – levels between 20 and 50 µSv/hr can be either in the exclusion zone or in the relocation zone…]

As of December 15, 1986, radiation levels were: at the ventilation stack of Power Unit 3 — 20,000,000 µSv/hr; at the ceiling of Power Unit 4 — 500,000 µSv/hr; at an altitude of 200 m from Power Unit 4 — 39,000 µSv/hr; at a distance of 100–150 m from Power Unit 4 — 5,000 µSv/hr; along the perimeter of the NPP — 300–5,000 µSv/hr; In Pripyat — 4-70 µSv/hr; in Chernobyl — 2-17 µSv/hr.

USSR Ministry of Defence units continued decontamination work at the plant, roads, and populated areas, conducting radiation monitoring and maintaining the decontamination centre. The decontamination plan for 16 populated areas in the Chernobyl and Polessyie districts designated for re-evacuation, as well as 36 buildings with a total living space of 29,000 square meters in the city of Chernobyl for temporary accommodation of workers from the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant of the USSR Ministry of Atomic Energy and construction organizations of the USSR Ministry of Energy, was completed.

The Shelter facility (Unit No. 4) was commissioned for maintenance at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant on November 28. Construction Department No. 605 of the USSR Ministry of Energy is carrying out construction and installation work to equip the information and diagnostic complex, which is part of the facility, for scientific research under the nuclear safety program. Exhaust fans maintain a negative pressure inside the facility, preventing the release of radioactive dust through structural leaks.

Temperature sensors inside the unit record 65°C, with temperatures reaching 140-150°C in some spots. The load on some of the supports inside the structure is unknown (monitored using sensors), so the decision was made not to pour concrete on the roof.

Agents "Kotov" and "Kolotov" reported that at the time of the explosion, 36 fuel assemblies (FAs) were in the fresh nuclear fuel storage facility at Unit 4. If the arrangement of these assemblies were disrupted and a critical mass were formed, an uncontrolled nuclear reaction was possible.
The fuel assembly's condition does not currently raise concerns. This issue is being investigated by specialists, who are considering possible fuel removal options.

In accordance with the program approved by the General Director of the Combine Production Association, the start-up of Power Unit No. 3 is scheduled for the second quarter of 1987. Therefore, units of the USSR Ministry of Defence are continuing the repeated decontamination of its roof and individual rooms.
High radiation levels, the ineffectiveness of robotics, and the frequent rotation of military personnel involved in these operations (from 50 seconds to 5 minutes on the roof, reaching the maximum permissible radiation dose) complicate the removal of highly radioactive debris from the roof. Some of it has fused into the bitumen coating and cannot be removed. Therefore, to reduce radiation levels, specialists are exploring the possibility of pouring a layer of concrete on the roof. According to their calculations, within 1.5 to 2 years, it will be possible to remove the remaining highly radioactive debris along with the concrete and bitumen for disposal.

According to the trusted "GVS" source, N.A. Shteinberg, chief engineer of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant, previously obstructed the initial decontamination of Unit 3 and delayed the start of the secondary roof cleaning, citing the futility of this work. Information about his unjustified actions has been reported to the Government Commission. Shteinberg's department has placed him under operational review.

Investigation into the threat of roof collapse of the auxiliary systems of the reactor equipment (ASRE) of Unit 3 due to concrete inflow from the Shelter structure is ongoing, as reported to you under No. 6102 of 20.12.86.

Equipment failures occurred at Units 1 and 2, which were connected to the national power grid, resulting in material damage.

For example, on November 13, 1986, at 1:00 AM, turbogenerator 3 of Unit 2 was shut down due to an emergency call because of overheating of bearing 5 and elevated hydrogen levels in the crankcase of bearing 11. According to operational sources among leading plant specialists, the causes of these malfunctions were defective thermal monitoring devices in bearing 5 and the presence of mechanical particles in the oil used in the sealing system, due to the fault of the turbine shop management, who failed to ensure proper acceptance of the sealing systems after repairs.

After troubleshooting, on November 15, when turbogenerator No. 3 was brought to idle, unstable operation of the automatic valve control system was detected. Senior turbine shop engineer E.G. Luchkov and mechanic E.M. Ozerov were investigated for possible involvement in this incident. The under-generation of electricity amounted to more than 24 million kWh.

On November 28, 1986, at 10:00 AM, the reactor at Unit 2 was shut down for 7 days following an emergency shutdown request due to the discovery of a crack in a riser pipe (cell 36-14). According to operational and official sources, the crack is presumably fatigue-related. The defective component is undergoing further investigation at the enterprise No.7291.
An investigation into the circumstances of this failure revealed no malicious intent or improper actions. The loss of electricity generation in this incident amounted to 205 million kWh.

On November 19 and 21, due to negligence by chemical plant personnel, the water chemistry regime in Tank 36 was violated twice, which could have led to contamination of the multiple forced circulation circuit (MFCC) and the subsequent shutdown of one of the units. Given that both violations occurred while shift supervisor Margulis was on duty, he was placed under operational investigation. During the internal investigation, involving the operative, additional measures were developed to prevent similar errors by chemical plant personnel in the future.

The department implemented measures to strengthen security measures at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant. The complete fencing of the first stage (power units No. 1 and No. 2) was completed at two points using engineering structures. However, the frequent turnover of conscripts from the special commandant's office of the internal troops guarding the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant and their inadequate training, including knowledge of pass templates and codes, do not yet meet the increased security requirements.

Construction of a temporary fence consisting of two rows of barbed wire, Bruno coils, and low-visibility barriers (HVBs) has begun around the perimeter of the station's Phase II site. Due to high radiation levels, installing a permanent fence is currently not feasible.

The department has assisted the station administration, the Combine Production Association, and other organizations in ensuring confidentiality when handling documents and conducting international telephone calls.
To this end, the creation of three first-line departments has been approved (there are currently four first-line departments operating in the zone), operational and official oversight of compliance with Instruction No. 00166-72 has been ensured, and regular meetings are held with employees of these departments. Information regarding violations of secrecy requirements in the plant's capital construction department during the preparation of the document on the material support of the Shelter structure has been received and acted upon. The nuclear power plant administration was faced with the issue of establishing departmental monitoring of long-distance telephone calls, taking into account the specific situation in the zone and the enemy's likely intentions.

Using operational and official capabilities, measures were taken to identify circumstances negatively impacting the situation in work collectives. Six reports of potential negative developments caused by workers' poor living conditions were received and acted upon.

Thus, on November 13 of this year, 12 GlavPRU ATP drivers, among those assigned, intended to leave the zone a week early, which could have resulted in equipment downtime and disrupted work schedules. On December 11, reports were received of a growing unfavourable situation among construction workers in the village of Nedanchichi in the Chernigov region and at the railway station, caused by poor housing and living conditions (housing was unheated, and there were interruptions in the supply of hot meals). The city party committee and GlavPRU leadership were informed of these and other incidents. The measures taken helped normalise the situation.

Based on information received jointly with the Ukrainian SSR Ministry of Internal Affairs task force, the Government Commission has ordered GlavPRU to conduct a series of construction and engineering works to ensure the safety of state property and eliminate the risk of fires in warehouses near the Shelter facility.

Through the GlavPRU administration, an attempt to install process equipment contaminated with radioactive substances on water pumping lines in the village of Zeleny Mys was prevented. The equipment was brought from Chernobyl without radiation monitoring by Sychov, foreman of the Pripyat Installation Department of the Yuzhteploenergomontazh Trust, with whom a preventative and preventative discussion was held.

During the past period, three reports of unjustified interest in events held in the zone were received. Following the investigation, V.N. Tyazhigory, a serviceman of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation who twice travelled to the Shelter facility area without permission and took photographs, had his film confiscated and was given a warning and explanatory talk.

During the specified period, operational staff conducted 13 discussions with staff on issues of increasing workers' political vigilance.

Counterintelligence activities at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant and its surroundings were conducted in close cooperation with operational groups from the Special Departments Directorate of the USSR KGB, the Ukrainian SSR Ministry of Internal Affairs, the command of the Military Construction Detachments, and other interested organisations and institutions.

Head of Directorate
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