

Belarus Nuclear Chronology

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Last update: December 2010

This annotated chronology is based on the data sources that follow each entry. Public sources often provide conflicting information on classified military programs. In some cases we are unable to resolve these discrepancies, in others we have deliberately refrained from doing so to highlight the potential influence of false or misleading information as it appeared over time. In many cases, we are unable to independently verify claims. Hence in reviewing this chronology, readers should take into account the credibility of the sources employed here.

Inclusion in this chronology does not necessarily indicate that a particular development is of direct or indirect proliferation significance. Some entries provide international or domestic context for technological development and national policymaking. Moreover, some entries may refer to developments with positive consequences for nonproliferation.

2010-2008

December 2010

On 1 December 2010, Belarus announced that it will return to Russia its remaining stocks of highly enriched uranium (HEU) - stored at the Sosny Science and Technology Center near Minsk - before the 2012 Nuclear Security Summit in Seoul. The James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies estimates there to be over 170kg of fresh HEU fuel at Sosny, with approximately 40kg of the material enriched as high as 90% U-235. The HEU stored at Sosny was originally provided by the Soviet Union for use in the Center's IRT nuclear research reactor, which was shut down in 1989. U.S. Secretary of State Hilary Clinton and Belarusian Foreign Minister Sergei Martynov made the announcement in a joint statement following a meeting on the sidelines of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Summit in Astana, Kazakhstan, on 1 December 2010. Belarus will return the HEU to Russia, and the U.S. government will provide technical and financial assistance to help expedite the process. Russia and Belarus concluded an intergovernmental agreement in October 2010 for the return of the HEU to Russia in exchange for Russia providing a supply of LEU to Belarus (to be used for research purposes).

—William Potter, "Belarus Agrees to Remove All HEU," CNS Feature Story, 1 December 2010, <http://cns.miis.edu>; William C. Potter and Robert Nurick, "The Hard Cases: Eliminating Civilian HEU in Ukraine and Belarus," *The Nonproliferation Review*, Vol. 15, No. 2, July 2008, p. 241; "Joint Statement by Secretary of State Clinton and Foreign Minister Martynov," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus, 1 December 2010, www.mfa.gov.by.

August 2010

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko refused to establish a joint venture with Russia's Inter RAO for the sale of electricity from Belarus's planned nuclear power plant. Russia insisted that the joint venture (JV) be established as a precondition for construction to begin, with profits being split equally between the two countries. The Russian

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government views the JV as a means for Minsk to repay the loan given to Belarus for the plant's construction. This latest disagreement again opened the possibility that Belarus may offer a tender to find alternative partners.

— "Belarus may refuse NPP construction deal with Russia — Lukashenko," RIA Novosti, 14 August 2010, www.rian.ru; "Belarus, Russia continue negotiations on joint venture to sell electricity," Belarusian Telegraph Agency, 10 November 2010, www.belta.by; "Peaceful atom ready for war," RIA Novosti, 5 August 2010, www.rian.ru.

April 2010

The United States considered inviting Belarus to participate in the Nuclear Security Summit, held on 12-13 April 2010 in Washington, DC, but the invitation was conditional on Belarus agreeing to eliminate its remaining stocks of highly enriched uranium (HEU) (approximately 170kg stored at the Sosny Science and Technology Center near Minsk). Belarus found this condition unacceptable and was therefore not invited. At the time of the April 2010 Nuclear Security Summit Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko stated (in reference to the HEU): "This is our commodity [...] we are not going to make dirty bombs, and we are not going to sell it to anybody. We're using it for research purposes."

— "Belarus has 'hundreds of kilograms' of weapons-grade uranium - Lukashenko," RIA Novosti, 15 April 2010, www.rian.ru; and William C. Potter and Robert Nurick, "The Hard Cases: Eliminating Civilian HEU in Ukraine and Belarus," *The Nonproliferation Review*, Vol. 15, No. 2, July 2008, p. 241; William Potter, "Belarus Agrees to Remove all HEU," *CNS Feature Story*, 1 December 2010, <http://cns.miis.edu>; Glenn Kessler and Mary Beth Sheridan, "Belarus agrees to give up its stock of weapons-grade uranium," *The Washington Post*, 2 December 2010, www.washingtonpost.com.

March 2010

In March 2010, due to a disagreement over cost, the governments of Belarus and Russia delayed the signing of a contract for Moscow to construct a nuclear power plant in Belarus. It was expected that Atomstroyexport would build the plant in the country's Grodno region, with the first reactor becoming operational around 2016. The disagreement between the two countries centered on the issue of liability, with Russia wanting Minsk to cover all potential liability costs. Rather than offering a tender, Belarus selected Russia to build the plant in exchange for the provision of a loan to cover some of the costs of the project. As a result of the disagreement, Belarus began to consider other partners, including China. In a March 2010 meeting between Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko and Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping, the Belarusian president invited China to participate in the project in exchange for a \$10 billion investment in the Belarusian economy.

— "Money row holds up Belarus's first nuclear power plant," RIA Novosti, 31 March 2010, www.rian.ru; "Project risk disagreements delay Belarus' first nuclear power plant," *The Nuclear N Former*, 31 March 2010, www.nuclearcounterfeit.com.

March 2009

At a 10 March press conference, Belarusian Deputy Energy Minister Mikhail Mikhadzyuk stated that Russia's Atomstroyexport would build the "turnkey" NPP upon completion of a Russo-Belarusian intergovernmental agreement on peaceful nuclear cooperation. That said, Atomstroyexport VP Aleksandr Glukhov reportedly noted that his company will not be the only one working on the project. Glukhov also reportedly said that the Belarusians

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will get a discount on their nuclear plant--construction of the two units is expected to cost approximately 4 billion Euros. Minsk still plans to commission the first unit in 2016. This month, the official Belarusian news agency Belapan quoted an opponent of the construction project, Heorhiy Lepin as expressing concerns that construction would be much more expensive than the Belarusian government was anticipating. He also said that the Ostrovetskaya site in Grodno, reportedly selected by the Belarusian government for the construction of the power plant, has not been sufficiently inspected or tested for seismic activity.

— "Russia-Belarus agreement on 1st Belarusian NPP to be signed in 2009-Minsk officials," Interfax, 10 March 2009. "Russian company offers Belarus reduced price for building nuclear plant," 10 March 2009. "Construction of nuclear plant more expensive than estimated-Belarusian expert," Belapan, 4 March 2009, OSC document CEP20090305950298. "Not enough research done to select nuclear plant site, Belarusian expert says," Belapan, 4 March 2009, OSC document CEP20090305950280.

February 2009

The Lithuanian ambassador to Belarus, Edminas Bagdonas, expressed concern regarding lack of transparency in the selection of the construction site for the Belarusian nuclear power plant as well as Russia's reported participation in the project. That said, he pointed out that the "determining factor" for Lithuania would be conformity of the plant to IAEA standards. Bagdonas also noted that Vilnius was interested in delivery of Ukraine-generated electricity to Lithuania through Belarus. However, Russia is an obstacle to practical implementation of these plans, the ambassador reportedly said. Last month, a Belarusian nuclear institute official noted that Minsk would provide Vilnius with an environmental impact statement. (See January 2009 entry, above.)

— "Lithuania objects to proposed Russian-built nuclear power plant in Belarus," 17 February 2009, OSC Document CEP20090218337004.

January 2009

Some sources say that in January, a delegation of French nuclear industry representatives visited Minsk to discuss potential nuclear cooperation. According to earlier reports, Franco-German nuclear consortium Areva-Siemens had responded positively to the Belarusian invitation to participate in the NPP tender. (See August 2008 entry, above.) To assuage concerns in Vilnius regarding Minsk's intention to construct a nuclear power plant on a site in Grodno region, close to the Lithuanian border, Belarus would provide an environmental impact statement to Lithuania, Deputy Director of Sosny's IPEP Anatoly Yakushev was quoted as saying. Yakushev noted that this document would be made publicly available once it was finalized.

— "French businessmen likely to discuss nuclear projects in Belarus-website," 27 January 2009, OSC Document CEP20090224950371. "Belarus will provide NPP environmental impact assessment to Lithuania-expert," Interfax, 30 January 2009.

December 2008

A Belarusian Energy Ministry official was reportedly quoted as saying that 24 Belarusian nuclear inspectors would start training in Russia, possibly in Obninsk, beginning in January 2009. Further, IAEA officials are set to visit Belarus that month to discuss training of Belarusian nuclear inspectors. Belarus and China have concluded an intergovernmental agreement on peaceful nuclear cooperation, Interfax reported. According to Energy Ministry sources in Minsk, Belarusian Ambassador to China Anatoly Tozik and Chinese Deputy Science Minister Cao Jianlin

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inked the agreement on 17 December. This "conceptual document" reportedly envisaged bilateral "cooperation in fundamental and applied studies, research in the peaceful use of nuclear energy, the joint development of innovative reactor technologies, nuclear safety, radiation safety and environmental protection" as well as personnel training and joint work in radiation technologies, nuclear medicine and radiotherapy. China had previously also expressed interest in participating in the Belarusian nuclear power plant construction project. (See August 2008 entry, above.) According to 19 December comments made by the Belarusian First Deputy Prime Minister Uladzimir Syamashka, Minsk has settled on constructing its first nuclear power plant at the Ostrovetskaya site in Grodno region, and building of housing for construction personnel would begin at the site on 21 January. — "Belarus nuclear experts will be trained in Russia," Naviny.by, 5 December 2008, in DOE Moscow Weekly, 8-12 December 2008, OSC Document CEP20081212026001. "Belarus, China sign agreement on peaceful nuclear cooperation," Interfax, 18 December 2008, OSC Document CEP20081218950043. "Belarus chooses site for nuclear plant," Interfax-Ukraine, 19 December 2008, OSC Document CEP20081219950335.

November 2008

Seven residents of the Grodno region of Belarus, where the proposed nuclear power plant construction site at Ostrovetskaya is located, reportedly launched a campaign against the project, Belapan news agency reported on 6 November 2008. The individuals, led by United Civic Party member Mikalay Ulasevich, argue that the NPP should not be constructed in this "natural reserve and recreational area," which was also a site for a powerful earthquake in 1909.

— "Opposition party launched campaign against nuclear plant in Belarus," Belapan, 6 November 2008, OSC Document CEP20081106950296.

October 2008

A new site for nuclear waste is necessary in Belarus, an official from the Belarusian energy ministry, Vladimir Vysotskiy, was quoted as saying on 10 October. Vysotskiy reportedly stated that there was no more space at the existing site and that the new site would be created in the 30-kilometer zone surrounding the new nuclear power plant, the site for which is yet to be agreed upon. On 15 October, Belarusian deputy energy minister Mikhail Mikhadzyuk confirmed September a speculation that the state commission has tentatively selected the Ostrovetskaya site in Grodno region for construction of the nuclear power plant. The official also indicated that the energy ministry could not "see any serious factors that [could] changes these conclusions before the end of the year." Earlier this month, however, the head of the laboratory at the Sosny Institute Vahan Kazaknyan expressed reservations about the Ostrovetskaya site, allegedly located on a seismic fault. Krasnopolyanskaya site in Mogilyov region would be the most preferable site, Kazaknyan stated, because this site was the "most explored" one and because it was more scarcely populated than Kukshinovskaya. On 28 October, Belarusian president Aleksands Lukashenko reportedly officially invited China's Guangdong Nuclear Power Group to participate in the nuclear power plant construction project. "The fact that you build nuclear power plants in China by yourself, have experience in it and cooperate with the world's biggest companies, that you are able to design and build nuclear plant[s] ... by yourself-all this is worth a lot," Lukashenka reportedly stated. On 29 October, a spokesperson for Russian nuclear regulator Rostekhnadzor reportedly stated that the Belarusian government has requested training assistance for Belarusian nuclear inspectors. Finally, a Belarusian foreign ministry official was reportedly quoted as

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saying on 30 October that Minsk would soon engage in a three-year technical cooperation project with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The project will involve training Belarusian atomic energy experts and improving the Belarusian nuclear regulatory framework.

—"Belarus says new nuclear waste dump is necessary," ITAR-TASS, 10 October 2008, OSC Document CEP20081010950003. "Site preliminary chosen for Belarus nuclear power plant," Interfax, 15 October 2008, OSC Document CEP20081015950550. "Belarusian expert evaluates potential sites for nuclear plant," Belapan, 9 October 2008, OSC Document CEP20081009950520. "Belarusian president invites Chinese company to bid for nuclear plant," Belarusian television, 28 October 2008, OSC Document CEP20081028950265. "Belarus president in talks with CGNPC," World Nuclear News, 29 October 2008, www.world-nuclear-news.org. "Egypt and Belarus have asked Rostekhnadzor to teach their inspectors how to inspect nuclear facilities," Interfax, 29 October 2008, www.rosatom.com. "IAEA to start new project of cooperation with Belarus-Minsk," Interfax, 30 October 2008.

September 2008

A 24 September Interfax report quoted a source close to the nuclear power plant project administration as saying that the Ostrovetskaya site in Grodno region had been chosen by the state commission as the priority site for construction of the NPP. The "infrastructure is better" on that site, the source reportedly stated.

Krasnopoljanskaya and Kukshinovskaya, both in Mogilyov region, were reportedly chosen as backup sites.

—"Belarus plans to locate its NPP in Grodno region," Interfax, 24 September 2008.

August 2008

The Belarusian government announced on 1 August that Russia's Rosatom and the Franco-German Areva consortium have applied to participate in the Belarusian nuclear power plant construction project. Vladimir Semashko, the former deputy prime minister of Belarus, reportedly indicated that Minsk would decide soon whether the agreement would be an intergovernmental or a tender. Yet, discussions with Areva regarding the project were reportedly postponed due to vacation of its CEO Anne Lauvergeon, Belapan news agency reported on 8 August 2008. On 11 August, Belapan reported that China's Guangdong Nuclear Power Group indicated its desire to participate in the NPP construction project. Belarusian deputy energy minister Mikhail Mikhadzyuk stated that participation could involve provision of supplies, services, and funding. In addition, the U.S.-Japanese Toshiba-Westinghouse consortium reportedly responded to Minsk's invitation to participate in the project by stating that cooperation would not be possible without conclusion of a peaceful nuclear cooperation agreement (123 Agreement) between the United States and Belarus. "At the same time, they said it would take a few years to conclude such an agreement," Mikhadzyuk was quoted as saying. However, prospects for conclusion of a 123 Agreement appear to be unlikely due to tensions in the U.S.-Belarusian relationship. A 29 August report indicated that Belarusian officials were open to the idea of the NPP construction to be conducted by a consortium.

—"Rosatom, Areva make bids to build nuclear reactor in Belarus," RIA Novosti, 1 August 2008. "Belarus postpones talks with French company over nuclear project," Belapan, 8 August 2008, OSC Document CEP20080808950420. "Chinese company wants to build Belarusian nuclear power plant," Belapan, 11 August 2008, OSC Document CEP20080808950420. "Belarus may start building its nuclear power plant next January," ITAR-TASS, 29 August 2008.

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June-July 2008

Belarus has officially invited Russia's Atomstroyexport, Franco-German Areva-Siemens, and the Japanese-US consortium Toshiba-Westinghouse to take part in the forthcoming nuclear power plant tender. Meanwhile, there are other ongoing anti-nuclear campaigns in Mogilyov region, which have collected over 2,500 signatures as of June 2008. On 11 July, Lukashenka signed a decree number 378 on the establishment of a nuclear energy department within the Belarusian Energy Ministry.

— "Russia's Atomstroyexport approached by Belarus on construction of NPP," Interfax, 9 June 2008. "Belarusians collect signatures against plans to build nuclear power plant," Belapan, 13 June 2008. "Belarusian president sets up nuclear energy department," Belapan, 11 July 2008.

May 2008

In May 2008, experts from the International Atomic Energy Agency conducted a three day visit to Belarus to assist with site selection for the nuclear power plant. Belarusian government officials have reiterated that Agency experts have been consulted on strengthening the regulatory system, on drafting nuclear energy legislation as well as training of cadres for the nuclear project.

— "IAEA to oversee Belarus nuclear plant project," RIA Novosti, 6 May 2008, <http://en.rian.ru>. Anya Loukianova, "Belarus takes a second look at nuclear energy," Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists online, 9 July 2008, www.thebulletin.org.

January 2008

On 15 January 2008, Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenka announced an official political decision by Minsk to move forward with nuclear power plant construction. The nuclear plant is set to consist of two third generation water-cooled water-moderated reactors. Belarus expects to commission the first unit by 2016 and the second unit shortly thereafter. Several potential construction sites, Krasnopolyanskaya and Kukshinovskaya, both in Mogilyov region, are currently under review with preliminary work projected to start in early 2009. However, the site at Krasnopolyanskaya may not be suitable for the nuclear plant due to cesium contamination.

— "Razvitiye atomnoi energetiki yavlyayetsya vazneishim faktorom obespecheniya energeticheskoy bezopasnosti strany" (Development of nuclear energy is the most important factor of providing for the country's energy security), president of Belarus website, 15 January 2008, <http://president.gov.by>. "Postanovleniye Soveta Bezopasnosti Respubliki Belarus nomer 1 ot 31 yanvarya 2008 goda" (Resolution 1 of the Belarusian Security Council), president of Belarus website, 31 January 2008, <http://president.gov.by>. David R. Marples, "The Energy Dilemma of Belarus: The Nuclear Power Option," Eurasian Geography and Economics, 49/2, 2008, pp. 215-227.

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2007-2001

November 2007

While Russia expressed its desire to participate in the construction of the Belarusian NPP in August 2007, on 1 November 2007 Russian Ambassador to Belarus Aleksandr Surikov was quoted as saying that Moscow was waiting

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for an official announcement of the tender as well as IAEA authorization for the project. Surikov also stated that Russia could potentially cooperate with France in construction of the NPP, the construction of which is projected to start in 2008, and conclude in 2017 and 2020, for the first and second block, respectively. [1,2] On 12 November 2007, Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenka signed a decree on measures to build the NPP, which created a unit within the Ministry of Energy to oversee the construction. Moreover, the presidential press service reportedly indicated that Belarus was establishing a legal foundation-creating the regulatory and licensing body Gosatomnadzor-all in accordance with IAEA recommendations. The Sosny Institute of Power Engineering Problems would provide scientific support for the nuclear project, while Belnapienergoprom would be responsible for design and engineering work. On 15 November 2007, members of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus reportedly endorsed Russia's participation in the NPP construction project; however, they stated that Belarus would not necessarily depend on uranium fuel supplies from Russia. Belnapienergoprom head Andrei Rykov stated that selection of the construction site was expected to conclude in April-June 2008. Rykov, however, indicated that Mogilyev was still considered to be the leading site for construction of the 2,000 megawatt NPP unit.

— "Russia ready to take part in Belarus nuclear plant tender," 27 August 2007, Interfax. "Russia waits for official authorization of Belarusian NPP construction - diplomat," 1 November 2007, Interfax. "Lukashenko signs decree on preparatory work for NPP construction," Interfax, 12 November 2007, OSC Document CEP20071112950387. "Russia - Belarus' priority partner in n-plant construction - expert," ITAR-TASS, 15 November 2007, OSC Document CEP20071115950187.

February 2007

Chairman of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus Mikhail Myasnikovich announced that Belarus intended to begin construction of an NPP in 2008. No decision has yet been made on reactor designs; however, the tender documentation has already been started and Myasnikovich stated that Areva and Atomstroyexport were the two leading contenders. Reportedly, Lithuania, Iran, and Kazakhstan have expressed preliminary interest in assisting with financing of the construction. Moreover, Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Leonty Khoruzhik was quoted as reassuring the public of the lack of potential hazards resulting from construction and operation of the NPP. Stated Khoruzhik, "If work is organized properly, nuclear power plants are assessed to pose a much lower environmental danger than other sources of energy."

— Alexei Breus, "Belarus sets 2008 target to begin construction of first nuclear plant," Nucleonics Week, 22 February 2007; in Lexis Nexis Academic Universe, <http://global.lexisnexis.com/us>. "Minister: Belarus Nuclear Plant to be Environment Friendly," Interfax, 26 February 2007.

October 2006

Belarus not planning to build nuclear power plant in near future: Belarusian First Deputy Energy Minister Eduard Tawpyanets announced on 3 October 2006 that the government is not planning to announce a tender for the construction of a nuclear power plant in the near future, citing sensitivity over the "Chernobyl syndrome."

— "Belarus Not Planning to Build Nuclear Plant in Near Future - Official," BBC Monitoring International Reports, 3 October 2006; in Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe.

June 2006

The Belarusian government approved a working plan for construction of the first nuclear power plant (NPP) in the

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country after the 10-year moratorium on nuclear construction expires in 2008. While Belarus president Lukashenka reportedly stated that a referendum on the matter would be held before the decision is finalized, in April 2006 he called NPP construction an issue of "national security." Two potential sites for the plant have figured in discussions - one in Gomel and one in Mogilyev. Officials at Sosny Institute of Power Engineering Problems reportedly expressed preliminary support for a PWR reactor design; however, there are indications that Belarus is willing to consider American and French designs, while reserving the Russian right to participate in the project. — Alexei Breus, "Belarusian government okays plan to build first power reactor," *Nucleonics Week*, 6 July 2006; in Lexis Nexis Academic Universe, <http://global.lexisnexis.com/us>.

15 November 2005

On 15 November 2005, Belarus signed the IAEA Additional Protocol. As of December 2007, ratification is still pending.

January 2005

In a January 2005 session of the Belarus Security Council, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenka reportedly stated that construction of a nuclear power plant was only "a matter of time." While Belarusian officials have expressed interest in nuclear power as early as 1993, the matter had not been considered in earnest due to potential difficulties in financing the project. However, the 2005 row between the Belarusian government and Russia's Gazprom gas company highlighted the need for diversification of energy sources and prompted consideration of alternative energy sources, particularly, the nuclear option. Reportedly, some Belarusian officials were considering importing technology from Germany and France, while others insisted that purchasing technology from Russia, particularly, the VVER-640 or the VVER-1000, would be the best option for Belarus. Initial estimates indicated that in order to finance the project, worth several billion dollars depending on technological choices, Belarus would have to seek external investment. Leadership of the opposition movement of Belarus called for adoption of the IAEA Additional Protocol and expressed doubt that Lukashenka would be able to make the best technological choices, instead of launching into a "great 'Nuclear Belarus' project." While members of the opposition stated that they were not opposed to promoting nuclear power, they expressed uncertainty in regards to public support for nuclear energy.

— Alexei Breus, "President Lukashenko calls for building nuclear plant in Belarus," *Nucleonics Week*, 17 February 2005; in Lexis Nexis Academic Universe, <http://global.lexisnexis.com/us>.

June 10, 2003

Report on Cesium seizures: In the first five months of 2003, the Belarusian State Security Committee (KGB) seized two containers of cesium-137, *Vechernyy Minsk* reported on 10 June 2003. KGB Chairman Leonid Yerin noted the seizures in a report to Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenka on seizures of illegal materials made by the security agency between January and May 2003. The report did not disclose any details about the two containers, but they are probably the same ones that were reported on by RIA Novosti on 13 February 2003.

—"Doklad predsedatelya KGB Aleksandru Lukashenka," *Vechernyy Minsk*, 10 June 2003; in Integrum Techno, www.integrum.ru.

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June 5, 2002

Lukashenka on Belarusian nuclear energy expertise: ITAR-TASS reported on 5 June 2002 that Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka visited the United Institute of Energy and Nuclear Research in Sosny and named Russia as Belarus' main partner in the area of energy and nuclear research. Lukashenka said that Belarus had managed to preserve Soviet-era expertise in nuclear power engineering, and voiced the hope that Belarusian and Russian scientists would collaborate with Western countries. According to Lukashenka, although Belarusian scientists have a bright future, they also have to adapt themselves to new circumstances, a phrase that suggests serious financial problems in the Belarusian nuclear research field.

—ITAR-TASS, 5 June 2002; in "Belarus: Lukashenka says Russia main partner in energy-nuclear research," FBIS Document CEP20020605000321.

May 2, 2002

Lukashenka against NPP construction in Belarus: Belarusian television reported on 2 May 2002 that Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka said that Belarus would not construct a nuclear power plant (NPP) on its territory. However, according to Lukashenka, Belarus was interested in purchasing electricity generated by NPPs in Russia if the price was sufficiently low, and even in the possibility of constructing a Belarusian-owned reactor at the Smolensk NPP in Russia. Lukashenka's statement followed the rumors that Belarus was negotiating to purchase the Ignalina NPP, which was denied by Lithuanian officials, who said that Lithuania had not received any official proposals from Belarus.

— Belarusian Television, 2 May 2002; in "President rules out nuclear plant construction in Belarus," FBIS Document CEP20020502000226. BNS, 25 April 2002; in "Lithuania casts doubt on proposals to sell nuclear plant to Belarus," FBIS Document CEP20020425000293.

June 22, 2001

Lukashenka affirms full agreement with Russia in ABM treaty issues: In a 22 June 2001 interview with Interfax, Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka said that Russian and Belarusian positions on the ABM Treaty are in full agreement, and that any practical US steps in the direction of abandoning the ABM Treaty could lead to changes in Russian and Belarusian policies. According to Lukashenka, Belarus is categorically against making changes to international agreements, and would take the necessary steps to protect its national security.

—"Lukashenka zayavlyayet, chto vozmozhnost vozvrashcheniya yadernykh raket v Belorussiyu poka ne izuchalas," Interfax, 22 June 2001.

May 31, 2001

INF inspection and monitoring activities cease: On 31 May 2001 all inspection and monitoring activities related to verifying the provisions of the INF Treaty officially stopped. In the 13 years of the treaty's existence, INF-inspectable sites in the United States underwent over 440 inspections, whereas INF-inspectable sites on the territory of Soviet Union and successor states were visited over 770 times. In addition to the on-site inspections, the United States and Russia maintained permanent groups of observers at monitoring portals at plants that formerly produced treaty-banned missiles in Votkinsk (Udmurtiya) and Magna (Utah), respectively. While the inspection and monitoring activities have ended, the treaty remains in force.

—"O zavershenii inspektsionnoy deyatelnosti po Dogovoru mezhdru SSSR i SShA o likvidatsii ikh raket sredney i

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menshey dalnosti (RSMD)," Announcement by Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Representative A.V. Yakovenko, 1 June 2001.

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2000-1996

14 December 2000

Belarus signs amendment on ending inspections and monitoring regime: On 14 December 2001 in Geneva representatives of the United States, Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan signed an amendment to the INF Treaty's Memorandum of Agreement outlining the procedures for ending on-site inspections and the monitoring regime of the missile production plants located in Magna (Utah), and Votkinsk (Udmurtiya). While the INF Treaty is of indefinite duration, the inspection and monitoring regime will expire on 31 May 2001.

—"Predstaviteli SShA, Belarusi, Kazakhstana, Rossii i Ukrainy podpisali popravku k memorandumu o Dogovore o yadernykh silakh sredney dalnosti," BelaPAN, 18 December 2000. Wendy Lubetkin, "Two Sets of Arms Control Agreements Signed in Geneva," U.S. Department of State International Information Programs, Washington File, <http://usinfo.state.gov>, 11 December 2001.

16 May 2000

Lukashenka signs law on ratification of CTBT: On 16 May 2000 Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka signed the law On Ratifying the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. According to Duma International Committee Chairman Nikolay Chabrinets, Belarus diligently follows its obligations under the treaty. The CTBT will enter into force 180 days after the 44 countries that possess nuclear technologies or nuclear power plants sign and ratify it.

—Yuras Dubina, "Belarus bez yadernogo oruzhiya," Belorusskaya gazeta, www.open.by, 16 May 2000.

20 January 2000

Minsk urges Washington to observe ABM Treaty: In response to the US Department of Defense's announcement that it intends to test a missile intercept system, the Belarusian Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that abrogating the ABM treaty may destabilize the whole structure of key global nonproliferation agreements. Yuriy Platonov, an aide to the Belarusian Minister of Defense, announced that Belarus will act as it deems necessary to further its own security interests, but added that if the United States unilaterally abandons ABM treaty, Russia will not abide by it, either.

—"Minsk prizyvayet Vashington soblyudat dogovor po PRO," Interfax, No. 2, 20 January 2000.

9 November 1998

Belarus signs new INF implementing agreements: On 9 November 1998, Belarus, Russia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and the United States signed seven new agreements on implementing the INF treaty, including a memorandum on procedures for the activities of the Special Verification Commission. Ambassador Stanislav Ogurtsov signed the agreements for Belarus.

—Wendy Lubetkin, "Five States sign new agreements on intermediate-range nuclear forces," Ukrainian Weekly,

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No.47, 22 November 1998, p. 2. Aleksandr Patutin, "Raket uzhe net, no kontrol ostayetsya," Belorusskiy Rynok, No.45, 16-22 November 1998, p. 5.

15 July 2006

The United Nations Security Council adopts resolution 1695 condemning the launch of missiles by North Korea. The resolution, supported unanimously by all members, including Argentina, required all Member States to prevent the transfer of missile and missile-related items, materials, goods and technology to North Korea. Cesar Mayoral, Argentina's representative, said he was happy with the resolution and hoped that North Korea would come back to the negotiating table and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

—"Security Council Condemns Democratic People's Republic of Korea's Missile Launches, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 1695 (2006)," United Nations Security Council SC 8778, 15 July 2006, www.un.org.

26 March 1998

Belarus indicates three possible sites for new power plant: Representatives of the Belarusian Energy Institute told Interfax that the Dubrov district (Vitebsk region), the Shklov district (Mogilyov region), or the Bykhov district (Mogilyov region) are possible sites for the construction of a new nuclear power plant in Belarus. The experts chose these areas because they are sparsely populated and have access to water. Although 17 percent of Belarusians do not oppose a new power plant, Director of the Sociology Institute Yevgeniy Babosov stated that only 5.7 percent of the population would "calmly" accept a nuclear plant in their area. Speaking at the Institute of Power Engineering Problems in Sosny on 3 February 1998, President Alyaksandr Lukashenka stated that the government will allow the people to vote by popular referendum whether a new nuclear power plant should be constructed. The president did not give a date for the proposed referendum.

—Interfax, "Three Sites Singled Out For Nuclear Power Plant in Belarus," no. 2, 26 March 1998. Belapan Radio, 4 February 1998; in "Lukashenka Says People Will Decide on Nuclear Power Plant," FBIS-SOV-98-035.

14 October 2006

The United Nations Security Council adopts resolution 1718 imposing sanctions on North Korea for conducting a nuclear weapon test. The resolution was unanimously supported by all 15 members of the Council, including Argentina. Following the vote, Ambassador Cesar Mayoral indicated that his country had agreed to implement all the provisions of the resolution but did not intend to legislate the control of dual-use material.

—"Security Council Condemns Nuclear Test by Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 1718 (2006)," United Nations Security Council SC 8853, 14 October 2006, www.un.org.

17 February 1998

Poll shows few Belarusians favor new nuclear plant: In a poll by the Zerkalo sociological service, 58 percent of 500 Minsk residents stated that they oppose the construction of a nuclear power plant in Belarus. Only ten percent supported the plant, while 15 percent stated their support depended on where the new nuclear plant would be located.

—Belapan Radio, 17 February 1998; in "Belarus: Minsk Residents Oppose Building New Nuclear Plant," FBIS-SOV-98-050, 19 February 1998.

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28 October 1997

Belarus will create a strategy to manage its nuclear waste: Chairman of the Industrial Atomic Energy Inspectorate Vladimir Yatsevich told Interfax that Belarus is currently planning a national strategy to manage its radioactive waste. Belarus currently accumulates nearly eight metric tons of radioactive waste each year from various industries, scientific laboratories, and medical research departments. The Sosny Institute of Power Engineering Problems is the only specialized facility in Belarus which stores radioactive waste, and as of 28 October 1997, its disposal facilities were at 85 percent capacity (it can hold a total of 1660 cubic meters of waste). The government has proposed nearly 2 billion Belarusian rubles (about \$67,000) to upgrade the facility. A special project has been planned with the IAEA to upgrade the storage facility according to international standards. In addition to Sosny, there are 77 other sites in Belarus which have been accumulating about 30,000 metric tons of waste annually from the Chernobyl accident cleanup.

—Interfax, 28 October 1997; in "Belarus Develops Strategy To Handle Radioactive Waste," FBIS-TEN-97-301.

23 October 1997

Scientists hold anti-nuclear conference in Minsk: The Belarusian Association of Independent Scientists and Inventors, the Belarusian Republican Association "Chernobyl Union," the Belarusian Social and Ecological Union "Chernobyl," the Belarusian Engineering Academy, and other public organizations held a conference in Minsk opposing plans to construct a nuclear power plant early in the next century. About 100 people participated in the conference. Among the topics discussed at the conference were: requesting a 15 or 20-year moratorium on constructing a nuclear plant in Belarus; upgrading current thermal power plants and technologies; criticizing the IAEA for concealing information on the amount of damage caused by the Chernobyl accident; and quickening the selection process for the commission of experts who will decide whether Belarus actually needs a new nuclear plant. The conference participants felt that a new nuclear plant would deepen Belarus' economic crisis, create radioactive waste problems, and perpetuate the country's wasteful level of energy consumption.

—Belapan Radio, 6 November 1997; in "Conference Proposes Moratorium on Building Nuclear Plants," FBIS-SOV-97-310.

16 October 1997

Chairman opposes plant construction: Chairman of the Subcommittee on Science and Technological Progress of the Belarusian House of Representatives Ruslan Ignatishchev stated in an editorial in *Narodnaya gazeta* that proponents of constructing a nuclear power plant in Belarus are deliberately misleading the public to support the project. Ignatishchev's editorial is a response to a May 1997 appearance of Minister of Fuel and Energy Valentin Gerasimov in the House of Representatives in which Gerasimov stated that nuclear energy is the only energy alternative for Belarus. Among Ignatishchev's arguments against construction is the fact that the new nuclear plant would supply only 4.5 percent of Belarus' energy needs, it could not begin operation until about 2012, and estimated costs for construction range from \$4 to \$9 billion (Belarus has an annual budget of \$1.5 billion). Costs for constructing a spent fuel storage facility would also be a major issue since neither Russia nor Ukraine permit the import of radioactive waste. As alternatives to a new nuclear plant, Ignatishchev suggests purchasing energy from already-existing nuclear plants (Ignalina in Lithuania, Smolensk in Russia, or Chernobyl and Rivne in Ukraine) and using Belarus' own natural gas deposits, which should last for another 80 years.

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—"Yesli zadayut vopros, stroit li v Belarusi AES, ya otvechayu—ni v koyem sluchaye!" Narodnaya gazeta, No. 215, 16 October 1997, p. 1.

26 September 1997

ABM Treaty: Belarus became a party to the ABM Treaty when the Memorandum of Understanding on succession to the ABM Treaty was signed in New York on 26 September 1997. Before the signing of the memorandum, Belarus had attended meetings of the Standing Consultative Committee established to monitor and consult on issues concerning the ABM Treaty. An earlier attempt to solve the problem of succession to the ABM Treaty failed on 31 October 1996, when US-Russian disagreements over tactical ballistic missile demarcation issues resulted in the cancellation of a signing ceremony for the succession memorandum.

—"U.S., Russia Near Agreement on Lower-Velocity TMD Systems," Arms Control Today, June 1996, p. 19, 27. ITAR-TASS, 2 November 1996, in "Belarus 'Disappointed' Over Blocking of Missile Defense," FBIS-SOV-96-214.

14 May 1997

Gerasimov "No Alternative" to nuclear power: During a 14 May 1997 parliamentary question-and-answer session, Belarusian Energy Minister Valentin Gerasimov recently stated, "There is no alternative to the development of nuclear power engineering in the Republic." The four nuclear reactors Gerasimov proposes would cost almost \$5 billion, but Belarusian experts say they would save the country \$264 million annually on electricity and fuel imports. Possible sites for a power plant are in Bykhaw or Shklow districts, Mahilow Region; and in Dubrowna district, Vitsiebsk Region. Swedish International Project Director Jan Nistad indicated that the power plant "would have to be Russian," and that if it were, Belarus would probably pay for it by exporting electricity to Russia. On 12 May 1997, Belarusian Deputy Prime Minister Gennady Novitsky had refuted reports that the Belarusian government was planning to build a nuclear power plant and had chosen a site for it. Novitsky acknowledged that the government was considering the option, but stated that no decisions had been made.

—Sources: Belapan, 15 May 1997; in "Belarus Searching for Site for New Nuclear Power Plant," FBIS-SOV-97-135. Ariane Sains, "Energy Minister Says New Nuclear Plant is Best Choice for Belarus," Nucleonics Week, 22 May 1997, p. 4. Andrey Fomin, ITAR-TASS, 12 May 1997; in "Official Dismisses Reported Plan for Nuclear Power Plant," FBIS-SOV-97-132.

13 May 1997

Chamber of representatives approves law on radiation protection: The Draft Law on Radiation Protection of the Public provides regulations for protecting the public and the environment from the harmful effects of radiation related to radioactive waste management, the use of ionizing radiation sources, and the aftermath of radiation-related accidents. In April 1997, the Belarusian Parliament created the Draft Law on Uses of Nuclear Energy and Radiation Safety. This draft law stipulates the following: that the safety of nuclear installations, radiation sources, radioactive substances, and radiation source handling be guaranteed; that sufficient financial compensation for nuclear damage be guaranteed (these provisions closely follow the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage); and that Belarus's international responsibilities in the field of nuclear law be met. This last requirement states that international agreements will take precedence over national legislation. The Belarusian Chamber of Representatives is expected to conduct the first reading of this law during the first quarter of 1998. Both the bill On Radiation Protection of the Public and the bill On Uses of Nuclear Energy and Radiation Protection take into

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account international agreements that Belarus has signed or plans to sign.

—"Belarus," Nuclear Law Bulletin, no. 60, December 1997, pp. 75-77.

26 March 1997

Green party requests statement of Ministry's position on NPP: The Belarusian Green Party sent a letter to the Ministry of Fuel and Energy, requesting a detailed explanation of the Ministry's position concerning the construction of a nuclear power plant on Belarusian territory. In the letter, the Green Party noted that if the explanation they receive is not "exhaustive," the Party will file an inquiry with the president, and should that fail, they will create a campaign demanding a national referendum on the issue.

—Belapan, 26 March 1997; in "Green Party Queries Government Stand on Nuclear Plant," FBIS-TEN-97-005.

March 1997

District volunteers to be NPP site: The Dubrovno (Dubrowna) district in northeast Belarus has proposed that it be the site of the nuclear power plant the government plans to build. While Dubrovno is one of the sites under consideration, the decision depends on the results of geological studies and final design of the plant. Minister of Fuel and Energy Valentin Gerasimov added that agreements with international energy organizations are also necessary.

—"Belarus considers sites," Financial Times: East European Energy Report, March 1997, p. 28. Tereza Khayutina, "Ploshadka dlya AES poka ne vybrana," Narodnaya Volya, 13 March 1997; in Ekoinform, no. 3, March 1997.

January 1997

International cooperation improved nuclear materials safety at SOSNY: In an article in the Belarusian journal Vektor, Deputy Chairman of Promatomnadzor Andrey Tukhto wrote that materials protection, control, and accounting (MPC&A) at Sosny improved significantly since international assistance programs began. The IAEA, Sweden, and Japan, in conjunction with Promatomnadzor and Sosny scientists, have contributed to strengthening control over Belarusian nuclear material by creating the Plan for Coordinated Technical Assistance (PCTA). The Plan has succeeded in creating a state MPC&A system on both government and reactor plant levels, specifying a method of interaction between state agencies and local plant operators, and working out government-specified requirements for an MPC&A system. The Plan has already assisted Belarus in meeting demands for physical protection, transportation and return of nuclear materials; specifying areas between the state and nuclear facilities on questions of nuclear responsibility; calling for increased physical security before licensing those working with nuclear materials; and introducing security programs for materials accounting on both state and facility levels. In February and April 1996 Los Alamos National Laboratory invited Sosny scientists to Albuquerque to attend courses on methods of MPC&A. In Minsk, a group of international lawyers met with Promatomnadzor to give insight on the establishment of the Belarusian law "On Radiation Safety and the Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy." Tukhto estimated that the PCTA spent nearly \$1 million on equipment installation and modernization. He outlined several problems Belarus must work on in the near future: completing an MPC&A information system, installing computer equipment and training personnel; installing radiation and measuring equipment in laboratories studying nuclear safety; obtaining technical assistance in developing a national system of materials control for the transit of nuclear materials and uranium products through Belarus; drafting legislation on nuclear protection; completing the system for physical protection of materials; and training personnel working with radioactive waste.

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—Andrey Tukhto, "Natsionalnyye mery i mezhdunarodnoye sotrudnichestvo v sfere obespecheniya yadernoy bezopasnosti v Respublike Belarus," Vektor, January 1997, pp. 10-11.

December 1996

Minister call for aid to build NPP: Belarusian Energy Minister Valentin Gerasimov said that Belarus is seeking \$3.5 to \$4 billion in aid to build a nuclear power facility, which is to be operational by 2005. The location has not yet been determined, but three possible sites have been chosen near the Russian border. A new nuclear power plant would create more energy independence for Belarus; it currently must import nearly 90 percent of its energy from abroad. Belarus currently has one unfinished nuclear plant near Minsk, but construction stopped following the 1986 Chornobyl accident.

—"Belarus expresses interest in nuclear power plants," Nuclear News, February 1997, p. 43. "Belarus Seeks Funds to Develop Nuclear Power Plant," Post-Soviet Nuclear and Defense Monitor, 20 January 1997, p. 6.

23-27 November 1996

Nuclear warheads, missiles, withdrawn from Belarus: On 23 November 1996 the last nuclear warheads were transferred from Belarus to Russia, and on 27 November 1996 the last of the SS-25 ICBMs were shipped to Russia. The last act in the denuclearization of Belarus occurred with surprising speed. Less than two weeks after Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenka hinted that the withdrawal of the weapons would be delayed, the Russian Strategic Rocket Forces announced that all nuclear warheads had been removed. The announcement led to some confusion, however, as while all the warheads were out, some missiles remained in Belarus.[3, 4] It appears that the SS-25 missiles were removed in two batches. According to Belarusian First Deputy Foreign Minister Valeryy Tsepkala, one group of eight SS-25s was shipped to Russia in mid-November, apparently during the week ending 22 November. A second set of seven missiles was given a ceremonial send-off on 27 November at a railroad base near the Lida ICBM base.[6, 7] (This latter number is consistent with the number of missiles present at the Lida base. The number given for the first shipment is one less than the total number of missiles at the Mozyr base, but it is possible that one missile was either shipped separately, or that Tsepkala erred.) The departure ceremony was attended by Russian Defense Minister Igor Rodionov, Russian Strategic Rocket Forces Commander Igor Sergeyev, and other military and political officials. Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenka did not attend, despite expectations that he would, because of political troubles in Minsk. Rodionov reaffirmed Russia's commitment to ensure the security of Belarus, in keeping with the terms of the CIS Collective Security Treaty (Tashkent Treaty), but did not extend any further security guarantees.

—"Belarus Completes the Withdrawal of the Remaining Russian Missiles," Press Release, Embassy of the Republic of Belarus to the United States of America, 27 November 1996. Interfax, 23 November 1996, in "Last Russian Nuclear Warheads Removed From Belarus," FBIS-SOV-96-228. Moscow NTV, 24 November 1996, in "Withdrawal of Missiles from Belarus `Still Continuing,'" FBIS-SOV-96-232. "Belarus gives up nukes, keeps missiles," WASHINGTON TIMES, 26 November 1996, p. 11. Radio Riga, 22 November 1996, in "Nuclear Weapons To Be Removed to Russia," FBIS-SOV-96-228. Valeriy Kovalev, "V Yevrope poyavilos' eshche odno bezyadernoye gosudarstvo," KRASNAYA ZVEZDA, 29 November 1996, p. 1. Russian Public TV, 27 November 1996, in "Rodionov Assures Belarus of Support Against Threats," FBIS-SOV-96-231. Aleksandr Zhilin, "'Topolya' uezhayut v Rossiyu," MOSKOVSKIYE NOVOSTI, no. 48, 1-8 December 1996, p. 8.

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1 October 1996

MC&A, upgrades completed at Sosny: The Department of Energy reported the completion of the new materials control and accounting system upgrades at the Sosny Science and Technical Center. Using CTR funding, Sandia, Los Alamos, and Argonne National Laboratories participated in designing the system, which complies with international norms for MC&A systems.[1,2] Japan and Sweden also assisted in funding the project. Included in the physical upgrades outside the buildings were infrared intrusion sensors, exterior lighting, video surveillance, security fencing, and turnstiles. Inside the buildings, the project strengthened the fresh fuel vault, installed motion sensors, established an entry control system for personnel entering secure buildings, sealed windows, and set alarms. The Department of Energy's main objective was to provide increased physical security for Buildings 33 and 40, where all of the direct-use fissile material will be stored. Department personnel also installed a computer-based materials control and accounting system to track and report inventories to both national and international authorities.

—DoE Press Release, "DoE Secures Nuclear Material In Belarus and Uzbekistan, Reduces Risk Of Nuclear Proliferation," 1 October 1996. Improving Nuclear Materials Security at the Sosny Science and Technical Center, U.S. Department of Energy, June 1997.

24 September 1996

Comprehensive test ban treaty signed: 24 September 1996.

August 1996

Soviet nuclear waste site discovered: The Belarusian Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection located an undocumented waste site at a former Soviet military base in the Kolasava settlement of the Stawbtowski region. The officials found radioactively contaminated equipment, but did not find any paperwork concerning how effectively the waste was buried. The Belarusian Ministry of Defense plans to build a new site for the waste at an approximate cost of 30 million rubles. It is unclear if Russia will help finance the project.

—RADIO MINSK NETWORK, 6 August 1996, "Nuclear Waste Site Discovered at Former Military Base," FBIS-TEN-96-009.

20 April 1996

Yeltsin on warhead removal timetable: At the G-7 nuclear safety summit in Moscow, Russian President Boris Yeltsin pledged that all nuclear warheads in Ukraine and Belarus would be transferred to Russia by December 1996.

—Scott Parrish, "Yeltsin To Request Relocation Of Western Nukes," *OMRI Daily Digest*, 11 April 1996.

20 March 1996

Cleanup system for radioactively contaminated areas: The Belarusian Institute of Power Engineering Problems is working on a project with TACIS to develop a boiler to be used at the Svetlogorsk Pulp Cardboard Plant to deal with fallout from the 1986 Chernobyl disaster. The boiler will have off-gas treatment and ash management treatment systems. The IPEP also has two projects with U.S. laboratories to deal with ash management and a co-generating power plant that will be fueled by contaminated wood. Among various other projects associated with the cleanup and management from Chernobyl fallout, much energy is being given to turf cutting and bulldozing projects to

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clean the layer of contaminated soil in the affected forest (3670 square kilometers, ed. note) and urban territories in Belarus.

—CISNP Discussions with Belarusian Official, 20 March 1996.

20 March 1996

IPEP coordinating nuclear waste project: The Institute of Power Engineering Problems is currently coordinating a project between Belarus, the IAEA, and Sweden to deal with all radioactive waste, including that from a future nuclear power station. Under the auspices of this project, money is being disbursed for equipment, training, travel, and for consultations by Western experts. The program will be completed by December 1996.

—CISNP Discussions With Belarusian nuclear official, 20 March 1996.

20 March 1996

Sandia-Sosny MPC&A programs overview: The Sandia National Laboratory has been assisting Belarus in its efforts to develop modern and effective indigenous MPC&A capabilities and upgrade the physical protection systems at Sosny. In FY95, a site survey of Sosny was conducted, a site visit to Sosny was completed, a design information exchange visited Sweden, and an as-ordered agreement (AOA) and task contract negotiation and signing took place at Sosny. In FY96, 16 participants from Belarus, Kazakhstan, Latvia, and Uzbekistan underwent basic physical protection system design training. In addition, a site survey was completed for Sosny building 40 and limited physical protection upgrades were installed in this building, physical protection upgrades were installed in Sosny building 33, a design coordination exchange visited Sweden, and AOA task contract negotiation and signing took place at Sosny.

—Statement of Tom Sellers, Director, International Security Programs, Sandia National Laboratory, Before the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, Governmental Affairs Committee, 320 March 1996, pp. 16-26.

14 March 1996

Lithuania not informed of Belarusian nuclear plans: The Lithuanian state nuclear safety inspection organ, VATESI, reported that Belarus had not informed it of its plans to build a nuclear power station, but had been under no obligation to do so.

—*The Baltic Observer*, 14-20 March 1996, p. 3.

14 January 1996

SRF Commander on denuclearization timetable: According to the Commander in Chief of the Russian Strategic Rocket forces, Colonel General Igor Sergeyevev, all nuclear warheads will be removed from Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakhstan by 9/96. Military units controlling missiles in Belarus are to be withdrawn by 9/1/96. Other sources report that Sergeyevev announced that the warheads would be withdrawn in the first half of the year. However, during the week of 1/8/96 Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenka stated that he did not recognize Belarus' 1993 pledge to become a non-nuclear state. He indicated that Belarus may not send the remaining 18 SS-25s to Russia. He reportedly said that he hopes to use the missiles as a bargaining chip to secure CTR funds.

—"Russia Says Republics To Give Up Nukes," *United Press International*, 14 January 1996; *Intelnews*, 16 January 1996.

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1995-1991

When Belarus gained independence in December 1991, there were 81 road-mobile SS-25s on its territory stationed at three missile bases, and an unknown number of tactical nuclear weapons. During the 1980s, a number of units equipped with intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs) were also stationed in the Belarusian SSR; however, all of these weapons were eliminated under the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty by 1991.

In May 1992, Belarus signed the Lisbon Protocol, which obligated it to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a non-nuclear weapon state, which it did in July 1993, and to ratify the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), which it ratified in February 1993. As a result of these commitments, Belarus transferred its nuclear weapons to Russia. The process of transferring tactical warheads was completed in May 1992, and the last strategic warheads and associated missiles were sent to Russia in November 1996. No nuclear forces have been stationed in Belarus since then, although the possibility of stationing Russian nuclear weapons in Belarus was broached by a number of Belarusian officials in the late 1990s.

The government of Belarus has considered construction of a nuclear power plant since 2005.

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