

# World and Nation

## Soviet Nuclear Disaster

### Chernobyl not first Soviet nuclear accident

WASHINGTON (AP) — Nearly three decades ago, something happened at Kyshtym, in the Soviet Union, that is a far greater secret than the nuclear meltdown in Chernobyl.

The Soviet silence about Kyshtym is an enduring one and American analysts are divided over what happened to cause 30 rural villages to vanish from Soviet maps and to turn an area some 1,500 miles northeast of Chernobyl into a vast radioactive wasteland in the Ural Mountains.

Soviet spokesman Boris Malakhov, giving his government's standard statement about events around Kyshtym, said, "I'm not going to comment on speculation."

But Soviet exiles and U.S. government studies paint a grim picture of the Kyshtym region and the nearby Chelyabinsk-40, the Soviet's first nuclear production facility, which turned out plutonium for weapons.

an area of up to 400 square miles — about one-third the size of Rhode Island — was poisoned by radioactivity greater than that produced by the U.S. atomic bombing of Japan, the Three Mile Island accident and perhaps the Chernobyl meltdown.

The names of some 30 Soviet villages simply disappeared from maps, indicating a resettlement program.

Agriculture became a memory. Lakes were declared off limits for fishing. Dams were built to con-

tain radioactive waterways. Rivers were diverted with a series of canals.

Zhores Medvedev, a biologist who fled the Soviet Union in 1973, maintains that hundreds of people died and tens of thousands more were affected by the Kyshtym fallout.

A 1977 Central Intelligence Agency report quoted Soviet sources as saying "hundreds of people perished" in late 1957 or early 1958.

Another emigre scientist, Lev Tumerman, wrote about a car trip he made through the area in the early 1960s:

"A road sign warned drivers not to stop for the next 30 kilometers and to drive through at maximum speed. On both sides of the road, as far as one could see, the land was dead: no villages, no towns, only the chimneys of destroyed houses; no cultivated fields or pastures, no herds, no people. Nothing."

### Aircraft detect radioactivity off Pacific Northwest coast

WASHINGTON (AP) — Small amounts of radioactivity from the Chernobyl nuclear accident have been detected by aircraft off the Pacific Northwest coast, an interagency task force said Monday, and patches of activity are moving across the continent at high altitudes.

The initial detections were made on samples taken over the weekend, the special task force monitoring the accident said.

No radioactivity has been detected

at ground level yet. The task force said, "The most likely source of early detection near the ground will be in rain water, particularly from thunderstorms reaching altitudes of 20,000 to 30,000 feet or more."

Officials at the task force said they "continue to believe there will be no public health risk" in the United States.

The task force statement advised potential travelers to "carefully monitor press reports."

### Soviets say radiation has spread past evacuated zone

MOSCOW (AP) — The government indicated Monday that radiation had spread beyond the evacuated zone around Chernobyl, and an official said foreigners would be allowed to visit the stricken nuclear plant when it was safe to do so.

A government statement also indicated that contamination threatened a river that feeds a major reservoir near Kiev, the Ukrainian capital of 2.4 million people 80 miles south of the disaster site.

The head of the International Atomic Energy Agency arrived for talks with Soviet officials about the April 26 accident.

An invisible cloud of radiation spread over much of Europe after a reactor caught fire in the Chernobyl plant. The Kremlin's official reports

say two people were killed and 197 injured, but other governments believe the toll is higher.

No health-threatening radiation levels were reported outside the Soviet Union on Monday, but precautionary measures remained in effect in some European countries.

In a four-paragraph statement distributed Monday by the official news agency Tass, the Council of Ministers said that a cleanup was under way at the Chernobyl plant and that radiation was found in both the Ukrainian and Byelorussian republics.

It was the Soviets' broadest description of the area affected and the first indication from the Kremlin that radioactivity had spread beyond the 18-mile evacuation zone.

Earlier reports mentioned only the immediate plant vicinity, which Moscow Communist Party chief Boris N. Yeltsin described Sunday in West Germany as a "danger area" from which 49,000 residents were evacuated.

The Chernobyl plant is about six miles from the border of Byelorussia, which lies north of the Ukraine.

Yeltsin said the reactor was not leaking radiation, but sediments in the vicinity were causing radioactivity readings of 100 roentgens an hour. On Sunday, Yeltsin said 150 roentgens an hour were found near the plant.

West German experts say exposure to 400 roentgens usually is fatal.

### Senate panel nearing vote on tax plan

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate Finance Committee Monday moved toward a vote on elements of an income tax-overhaul plan under which 80 percent of taxpayers would pay a 15-percent rate but lose many of their traditional deductions.

Chairman Bob Packwood, R-Ore., told reporters, "We are clearly very close" to having a majority of the 20-member committee for the bill.

The bill is modeled after one that Reagan sent to Congress last year and labeled as the top legislative priority of his second term. The president asked for lower individual and corporate tax rates and fewer deductions and exemptions. Packwood's version goes even further.

It would slash the top individual rate to 27 percent, but tax an estimated 80 percent of taxpayers at the lower rate of 15 percent. Personal exemptions would rise to \$2,000 for all but the wealthiest people.

### Marcos 'would return home' if issued Philippine passport

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — The government said Monday that President Reagan had suggested Ferdinand E. Marcos' passport be restored, and the ousted president's lawyer declared Marcos would return home immediately if that was done.

In a meeting with several reporters Monday morning, attorney Rafael Recto said he did not think Marcos would use the passport to go to a third country, as some U.S. officials have suggested.

Marcos fled Feb. 26 after ruling the Philippines for 20 years, driven into exile by a military-civilian revolt. Corazon Aquino, his opponent in the fraud-tainted Feb. 7 election, took over as president.

He recently has made repeated statements claiming he still is the nation's legitimate president and encouraging his supporters to demonstrate against Aquino.

Manila police broke up demonstrations by Marcos loyalists Sunday and Thursday following three weeks of round-the-clock protests in front of the U.S. Embassy. The former president's supporters claim the United States kidnapped Marcos by flying him from the Philippines to Hawaii.

Vice President Salvador Laurel told a news conference Monday that Reagan brought up the question of Marcos' revoked passport when they talked Thursday at a meeting of the Association of South East Asian Nations in Bali, Indonesia.

Laurel said he told Reagan: "I don't believe we are ready to have Mr. Marcos back. We are returning to constitutional normalcy. We would not want any disturbance or delay."

He said the decision will be made by Aquino, but he does not believe Marcos should return until a new

constitution is adopted and elections are held.

Aquino's administration revoked the passports of Marcos and his family when they fled. The lack of passports prevents them from leaving the United States.

Laurel said Marcos might foment trouble if he returned and could finance opposition to Aquino from a third country, where he might be able to retrieve some of the billions of dollars the government says he stole from the Philippines and sent abroad.

At a breakfast meeting Monday, several military leaders praised Aquino as their commander in chief. Politicians of different parties had questioned whether she could command the loyalty of generals accustomed to Marcos' iron-fisted style.

Army Gen. Salvador Mison said, "I think we are better off now because the policies are clearer."



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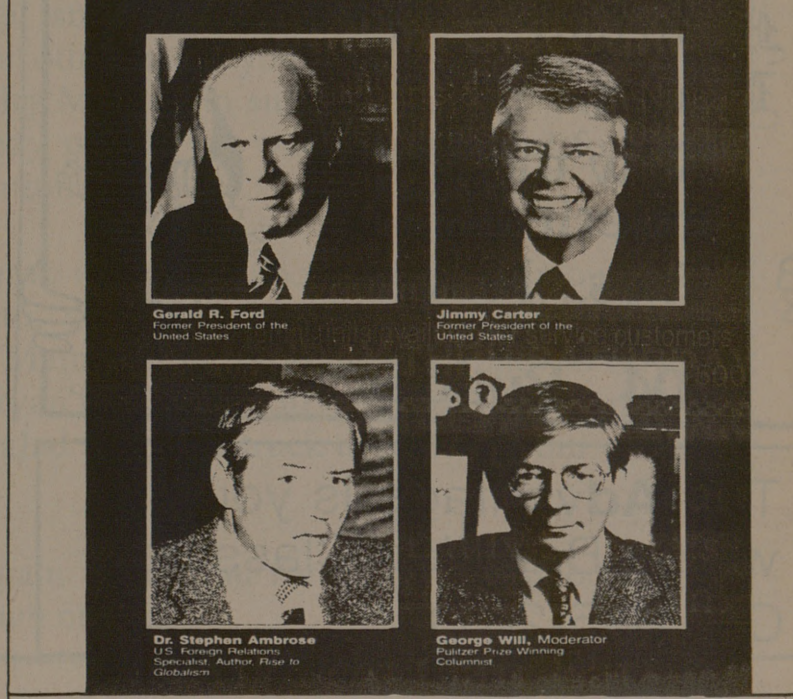
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