

CHERNOBYL

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kicking out some Soviet residents critical of its society. While this report should be treated with caution given its self-serving quality, the recent warming between Moscow and Seoul has undoubtedly angered North Korea. (Paul Goble)

**SWISS EXPEL SOVIET DIPLOMAT.** The Swiss government yesterday expelled for spying a Soviet diplomat attached to Moscow's mission to the UN in Geneva. Two other Soviet diplomats were barred from re-entering Switzerland, Reuter reported. The Swiss authorities said the three had unsuccessfully tried to acquire scientific-technical information about military and economic questions. (Paul Goble)

**VATICAN DENIES GORBACHEV MESSAGE WAS ON LITHUANIA.** Vatican sources told RFE-RL yesterday that the message passed to Pope John Paul by Soviet foreign affairs advisor Vadim Zagladin was generic in content. They denied Italian press speculation that the Kremlin had asked for mediation in the dispute between Moscow and Lithuania. The sources did say that the Vatican's newly-named envoy to the Soviet Union, Archbishop Francesco Colasuonno, will make his first visit to Moscow within a few weeks. He reportedly will focus on the breakdown in talks between Russian Orthodox and Uniate churchmen. (Paul Goble)

**"OPEN SKIES" TALKS TO RESUME IN BUDAPEST.** The talks between NATO and Warsaw Pact states on President Bush's "open skies" proposal resume in Budapest on Monday. During a February session in Ottawa, the talks deadlocked with Moscow isolated even within its own alliance on many issues. The current session is scheduled to last until May 12. (Paul Goble)

**MONGOLIANS STRIKE AT SOVIET COMPANIES.** More than 500 workers have gone on strike at Soviet firms in Mongolia in sympathy with truck drivers who are demanding better working conditions, Reuter reported yesterday. Residents told the news service that more demonstrations are planned this weekend throughout that country, demanding better conditions and jobs for Outer Mongolia's approximately 27,000 unemployed. (Paul Goble)

**NEW PROBLEMS AT CHERNOBYL' PLANT CAUSE PANIC, PROTESTS.** Technical problems at the Chernobyl nuclear plant in northern Ukraine last week resulted in the shut-down of two reactors and caused panic in a town 100 kilometers away from the station. Leonid Klymchuk, head of the Rukh organization branch in Korosten', Zhitomyr oblast, told RFE-RL yesterday that rumors had begun circulating April 12 that there had been another accident at the Chernobyl' nuclear power plant. Panic spread and...

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At first the local authorities reportedly denied that anything had happened; but after the crowd had grown to about 3,000, they acknowledged that an accident had indeed occurred. A bus-load of representatives headed by Rukh activists and local journalist was despatched to the Chornobyl' plant. It transpired that that pressure in one of the pipes in the station's second reactor had risen too high and that steam was escaping. The problem was considered serious enough to shut off both the second and the third reactors; the first reactor is already down for renovation.

Radiation readings taken by the Korosten' representatives at the plant indicated that the radiation level had not risen as a result of the latest problems at the station. Workers in Korosten' reportedly went back to work on Monday only after they had been reassured that no new radiation leak had occurred and after the Zhitomir region first Party secretary Fedorov had visited the town. Coming on the eve of the fourth anniversary of the Chernobyl' nuclear disaster, this incident highlights both the authorities' continuing efforts to hide problems and the population's concerns about the dangers of nuclear power plants in the USSR. (Bohdan Nahaylo)

**SOVIET EXPERT RULES OUT FUTURE CHERNOBYL ACCIDENTS.** Yuri Tsoglin, chief of nuclear safety at the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences Institute of Nuclear Research, told TASS yesterday that new precautions have been taken which rule out a repetition of the 1986 nuclear accident at Chernobyl. He said that Chernobyl is much safer than it was four years ago. Tsoglin added that the design of safety rods has been changed and more enriched fuel is being used. Moreover, the new safety system now works twice as fast as the original one, and an additional back-up system has been installed. (NCA/Paul Goble)

**ANOTHER UZBEK OFFICIAL SENTENCED FOR CORRUPTION.** TASS reported yesterday that the RSFSR Supreme Court had sentenced former Khorezm Oblast Party chief Mad'yar Khudaibergenov to six years in an ordinary labor camp. The former official had admitted taking 72,800 rubles in bribes. The report said that much of the material incriminating Khudaibergenov could not be confirmed; in handing down a sentence that is less than the law requires, the court took account of his poor health and service in World War II, and also the fact that he had returned money and valuables worth six million rubles.

Since the intensification of attacks on Tel'man Gdlyan and Nikolai Ivanov, who led the team investigating the Uzbek corruption scandal and have subsequently been accused of using illegal methods in their investigation, most defendants