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Chernobyl

doctor of biological sciences, by POISK special correspondent Mikhail Dubrovskiy: "The Vorontsov Defense"; date, place of interview not given; first paragraph is editorial introduction]

[Text] Our special correspondent Mikhail Dubrovskiy has talked to the new chairman of the USSR Goskompriroda [State Environmental Protection Committee], the first non-party member minister in the union government, Doctor of Biological Sciences Nikolay Vorontsov.

[Dubrovskiy] Your position at present resembles very much the situation in which Leonid Ivanovich Abalkin is now finding himself. As a major scientist-economist, he criticized the government on the issues of economic management extensively and persistently in his time. At present, he is a member of the government, just as you are. Now he often draws the fire of criticism himself. Do you, Nikolay Nikolayevich, find it complicated to be a captain of this huge committee and map out its strategy without having experience in this kind of work?

[Vorontsov] The analogy is not very precise. I never criticized the Goskompriroda for the simple reason that our paths never crossed from the moment this department was born until the time I received the appointment. For as long as I was an active scientist, not one person from this organization approached me. This is particularly interesting because I am associated with the issues of environmental protection not only as a scientist-zoologist and genetics specialist, but I also belong to three scientific societies concerned with the issues of ecology.

[Dubrovskiy] Thus far you have a dual personality of a scientist and an apparatus functionary. Does one interfere with the other? After all, the style of work and the mentality are different.

[Vorontsov] The Goskompriroda has several different tasks. As its chairman I should give advice to our president, prime minister, and the government on the utilization and protection of nature. Ecological monitoring is the second task. However, along with these everyday tasks, we have to set forth a strategy for utilizing nature.

What do they usually mean by environmental protection in our country? Some kind of resuscitation of the environment. This is like reducing the entire medical science to an ambulance service. Isn't this absurd? However, these very tasks are usually considered central to environmental protection plans. Considerable funds are allocated for these tasks to be accomplished, but they are not spent. Certainly, we must improve the filters of dust-scrubbing and gas-filtering equipment and treat waste waters. However, thus far we have not had the main point, the ideology of resource husbandry, the definition of ecological capacity, biospheric and geographic approaches. We robbed Peter to pay Paul. There is no argument, we have to do this. However, not just this!

trad sign of strength

[Dubrovskiy] Therefore, you are facing the task of developing a new ideology of the system. Is it clear to you at present?

[Vorontsov] Yes, in its general outline. First of all, we should overcome our technocratic attitude toward nature. Until very recently nature was just one of the resources for us, and an "inexhaustible" one at that. Say, there are coal deposits in the Donbass. There are Krivoy Rog ores nearby. So let us build up the iron and steel industry there based on the Donetsk coal, regardless of whether the land and the people will bear it. At present we have an ecological disaster zone in the southeast of the Ukraine.

We have dammed the Volga with uncounted GES [hydroelectric power stations] without making calculations to any serious extent. Why have not the Americans undertaken a similar endeavor? It would have been easy for them to put similar dams across their rivers of the lowlands, the Mississippi and Missouri. Don't they need electricity? Perhaps the point is that in the United States the land has masters whereas in our country it belongs to the state—that is, to nobody. Notions such as the ecological capacity of an area were not used at all until recently! We treated the land without mercy, giving no thought to the consequences, and in general we were too late to offer it protection. The measures planned in the preliminary draft of the long-range program for curing the ecological situation until 2005 cannot stand up to any criticism.

Here is an example. The air pollution situation is the most dangerous in the southeast of the Ukraine. The situation in Zaporozhye, Dnepropetrovsk, Dneprodzerzhinsk, areas of the Donbass, Voroshilovgrad Oblast, and especially in Mariupol and Krivoy Rog, is catastrophic. For example, statistics for Krivoy Rog are as follows—1,290,000 tons of emissions a year. It was expected to reduce them to 1 million by 1995, to 800,000 tons by the year 2000, and to 700,000 tons by 2005. This means that we are planning almost the same level of gaseous pollution in Krivoy Rog in 2005 that we have in Mariupol at present—785,000 tons a year! If we cannot clean up perceptibly the atmosphere of Krivoy Rog it may, perhaps, be more honest to tell the residents so. Will we really have to ship in shift labor to the Ukraine?

We must look for a way out of this situation. I talked about this with First Deputy Chairman of the Ukrainian Council of Ministers Ye. Kachalovskiy. He listened politely and responded that this issue can only be resolved in Moscow. I met with the minister of metallurgy right away. However, he had the plan for 1989 and 1990 on his mind rather than this.

It is necessary to change our thinking. The Goskompriroda has already completed preparing the Environmental Protection Law. It has already been cleared by the Ministry of Justice. We are now submitting it for the first inspections to the USSR Council of Ministers and the Committee for Ecology of the Supreme Soviet. We

hope that this law will take effect as soon as the end of next year following a public discussion for which we will definitely submit it. Do you know what the centerpiece of the law is? The primacy of ecology over economics, of the interests of citizens over the interests of departments, which are frequently passed off as the interests of the entire people. I would like to emphasize one more essential provision delineating the rights of the union and the republics in the sphere of environmental protection. It provides for setting all-union ceilings for the concentration of pollutants. A republic may tighten these standards but cannot liberalize them!

[Dubrovskiy] You would agree that apart from the law the state committee needs realistic methods of influencing the ministries...

[Vorontsov] To this end, all functions of state monitoring of the condition of the environment need to be transferred to the Goskompriroda. Meanwhile, they still have not been transferred to us! Of course, the work of the agrarian complex of the country is impossible without land registration. However, why does this complex control the condition of the soil rather than us? The USSR Goskomgidromet [State Committee for Hydrometeorology] headed by the highly-skilled specialist Corresponding Member of the USSR Academy of Sciences Yu. Izrael is not surrendering to us the monitoring service (condition of the air basin, etc.). Izrael says approximately the following: You send a request to us, and we will respond...

fish
Here is yet another episode involving the Minrybkhhoz [Ministry of Fishing Industry]. This ministry has had monstrous violations under its belt since the times of Minister A. Ishkov. It studies the resources itself using its institutes, sets its own plan, fishes itself, and monitors itself. I recall a speech by our leading ichthyologist Corresponding Member of the USSR Academy of Sciences A. Svetovidov in 1968: "Previously, the Minrybkhhoz caught the fish of 'school age.' Now they have finished fishing 'day care centers' and are switching to fishing 'nurseries.'" This kind of "self-monitoring" makes it possible for the Minrybkhhoz leadership to justify reductions in the grey mullet population in the Black Sea by the ecological situation which is deteriorating there. Indeed, it is alarming, but rapacious overfishing is the main reason. After all, the fish resources have been depleted catastrophically due to overfishing even in the Barents Sea, where the environmental-protection situation is much better. Where have the cod, capelin, halibut, and navaga gone?

[Dubrovskiy] However, along with the "ordinary" organizations which you have to monitor there is also an "extraordinary" one. I mean the military. It is exempt from control to this day.

[Vorontsov] The previous special position of the Ministry of Defense will certainly change in the new political and international environment. The situation is quite absurd. Any military facility of any consequence is

visible from the satellites. It is necessary to release and strictly delineate geographically all locations of previous nuclear explosions on the ground and in the atmosphere and the dynamics of radioactivity changes in order to site enterprises rationally and guarantee the safety of the populace. We are forced to use the data of foreign scientists; meanwhile, we are interested primarily in the Trans-Volga area, Kazakhstan, and Novaya Zemlya. While not justifying the experimental explosions of nuclear weapons (my article "On the Biological Influence of Nuclear Explosions" was published in LENINGRADSKAYA PRAVDA as long ago as 1957!), I should note that the radioactive effect of the Chernobyl explosion has exceeded many times over the effect of all detonations of nuclear weapons combined. The Ministry of Defense was not to blame for the Chernobyl catastrophe. Moreover, it was exactly the army, the soldiers and officers that had to do the most difficult part of the job while cleaning up after the accident.

Going back to the Armed Forces and environmental protection, at present our Vladivostok Division is forced to engage in "military operations" against the Red-Banner Pacific Fleet and its commander personally. Over there, they have collected a lot of material on the oil pollution of the sea and on dumping by the ships at sea. Apparently, everybody is on our side—the kray party committee and the kray executive committee. However, the commander of the Red-Banner Pacific Fleet does not take orders from anyone. I have sent a letter to the minister of defense. We are waiting for a response and, mainly, for results. After all, it is the same nature for both the civilians and the military.

[Dubrovskiy] Do you see a realistic way to make the Goskompriroda independent of the ministries?

[Vorontsov] There has been much talk about the presumed need to make the Goskompriroda chairman a deputy chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers and then, supposedly, all problems will take care of themselves. Incidentally, Academician A. Yanshin wrote about this in POISK, and a couple days ago the writer S. Zalygin wrote this in PRAVDA. However, what will it do for us? Frankly, I am a quite inexperienced minister. So, should I become an even more inexperienced deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers? As it were, Nikolay Ivanovich Ryzhkov already has 12 deputies. I do not think it is feasible to become the 13th deputy. He simply will not have time for me. Personally, I have six deputies of my own, and I do not get to see some of them for a week at a time. No, it is better to remain under the supervision of V. Doguzhiyev, deputy prime minister for emergencies. "Only" four committees, including ours, report to him. It is easier that way, after all.

Certainly, the operation of the Goskompriroda should ideally be absolutely autonomous. However, this has yet to be ensured, despite the existing resolution of the CPSU Central Committee and the USSR Council of

Ministers, which says, black on white: transfer all functions of monitoring the condition of the environment to the USSR Goskompriroda. Executing this is one of our most immediate tasks.

[Dubrovskiy] It appears to me that strict environmental protection legislation could solve many of your problems. It would give the committee powerful economic levers. Our scientist-ecologists have long been talking about implementing the principle "he who pollutes pays" in our economy. It has long been doing the job efficiently in Western countries.

[Vorontsov] It will be in effect in our country as well from 1991 on. Fees are envisaged for the "standard" environmental pollution, as well as fines for above-the-norm emissions which it has been resolved to impose on enterprises polluting the environment. How to use the tremendous funds paid in to us is another issue. I am convinced that they should be used not only to finance the monitoring, improve ecologically pure technologies, and cure the situation in various troubled areas of the country. Along with this, they should be used for rewarding specific enterprises and people who have been complying with our requirements in an exemplary manner, who have commissioned efficient waste treatment systems and resource-efficient technologies ahead of schedule. We should do this so that the people feel that creation of the Goskompriroda organization has brought about improvements in their life rather than the other way around. However, it would be naive to expect quick results.

[Dubrovskiy] The Goskompriroda was set up at the time the staff of other departments was cut. It is not surprising that many apparatchiks rather than ecological specialists ended up in it. Are you concerned about it?

[Vorontsov] Certainly I am. On the other hand, however, I am a scientist not conversant in the secrets of ministerial work, in the departmental tug-of-war. This is why I will need aids and advisers from the ranks of the apparatus for as long as the current state structure exists. I would like to note that I worked for 7.5 years in the apparatus, and I was the learned secretary of the Siberian Division of the USSR Academy of Sciences for biological sciences, and at the same time headed a laboratory in the Institute of Cytology and Genetics.

I do not think that "apparatchik" is a foul word. The issue should be raised in a slightly different manner: Employees should bring real benefits to the cause they serve. If they think that theirs are cushy jobs, if they are going to go easy on their former colleagues, if an enterprise director can get such officials to sign any statement favorable for him, then they must be tossed out mercilessly. If one wants to work and is capable of learning the basics of ecological literacy, retraining courses will be open for such people soon, and I will cooperate with them with pleasure.

I am not going to recruit staff on the basis of questionnaire particulars. I recently met the chairman of our

Kamchatka Division. He is a man whose heart is in his job. I am not going to look into his file in the personnel department in order to find out whether he is a scientist or an apparatchik.

Of course, I will primarily count on specialists. Indeed, they are few in our organization. Who do we need? Geobotanists, soil scientists, geographers, zoologists, geologists, marine biologists, economists, lawyers, specialists on subsurface water protection, electrical engineers, nuclear scientists, production engineers... Perhaps, I forgot some group. We expect to set up a scientific-technical council of the Goskompriroda with their participation and draft to it our most knowledgeable scientists, and not just one or two but a lot of them.

[Dubrovskiy] Won't this be an excessively cumbersome structure?

[Vorontsov] Look at the tasks we are facing! Let us, for example, take the ecological mapping of territories, which thus far virtually has not been done in our country, the actual creation of a series of ecological maps of our country that will reflect all of its resources, the methods of their utilization, as well as all enterprises. It is not that the enterprises should just be marked—it is important to know which exact resources the plants and factories use, whether they harm nature, and what the migration of emissions through the hydrological and soil systems is....

Meanwhile, 450 people in the Goskompriroda apparatus are all we have to work with. Do you know how many people there are in a similar ministry in the FRG? Six hundred people, not counting the ministries of respective lands. Sergey Petrovich Kapitsa told me that in Singapore, one of the ecologically purest countries of the world, the building of the Ministry of Environmental Protection is a skyscraper 22 floors tall. Over there the ministry was set up in 1972, and in our country in 1988. Do you know what the size of the territory of Singapore is compared to ours? The European segment of the USSR alone is equal in area to all of Western Europe, where each state has its own ministry of environmental protection with a number of employees no smaller than here.

Meanwhile—this is laughable—there are only two computers at our disposal. We cannot even equip them with the personnel department so that they would not handle forms but would put together a bank of data on which specialists do which research in which areas. This is priceless information! However, we do not even have it, to say nothing of the data banks on resources and pollution.

It has become somewhat easier since republic and oblast environmental protection committees were created. They have just started their operation. We will also set up such councils there. However, we are running into difficulties that are hard to overcome. For example, major centers such as Moscow, Kiev, Leningrad, Riga,

Tallinn, Sverdlovsk, Novosibirsk, Irkutsk, and Vladivostok have extensive scientific potential. What about Tyumen Oblast, however? The territory is tremendous, pollution is monstrous, but the scientific resources are insignificant.

[Dubrovskiy] Do you fear that in light of the current complicated ethnic problems the republic committees will be in it for their own ecological gain? Do you fear an "ecological war" between the republics?

[Vorontsov] This is a quite probable danger. Let us say one republic cuts over its runoff-retaining forests adjacent to the border and mudflows hit another republic. Here is a more specific example. By now Belorussia has lost about a quarter of the arable land due to Chernobyl. If it takes up the draining of the swamps now, the rivers of the Ukraine and the Baltic area will be deprived of their water balance.

I agree that a republic should have sovereign rights to the soil, and to a considerable degree to the forests. However, when it comes to the runoff-retaining function of forests, I begin to think hard. What about such rights with regard to rivers?

It is logical for Latvia, for example, to have the entire Lielupe River, which begins and ends in its territory. However, when they tell me that it should have the same rights to the Daugava, which they call Zapadnaya Dvina in the other republic, I begin to have doubts.

Indeed, we have set up republic environmental protection committees. Interregional, interrepublic groups of specialists at the USSR Goskompriroda come next. We have no right to disperse information. It is our responsibility to know the situation as a whole and have an opportunity to influence it. For example, let there be a group of experts who know everything on the Baltic Sea region, which includes all of the Baltic area, some of Leningrad Oblast, Karelia, Belorussia, Kaliningrad Oblast, and some of the Upper Volga Basin. If we do not set up this group, what are we to do: Solicit information from each region on the situation they have? As a result, we will have to piece together a huge mosaic with uncertain results.

[Dubrovskiy] Sometimes one gets the impression that our ecological troubles are not associated with the economic system that allows the ministries to rape nature, but rather with common ecological illiteracy. After all, a plant manager incapable of understanding that waste treatment facilities are a necessity is not a malefactor but a person who was not taught the fundamentals of ecological awareness in his time.

[Vorontsov] You are right. Comprehensive ecological education is necessary. A course of ecological basics in schools is necessary. However, where are we to get specialists? I doubt whether a regular biology teacher is up to it. This means that ecological classes must be offered in colleges, in absolutely all of them. The curriculum has to be different—one kind in a petroleum

industry college, another in an agricultural one, and yet another in a teacher's college. However, they will not produce the desired effect if they are not preceded by a general biology course. After all, no college in our country offers a course on the strength of materials without physics and mathematics! This is what we are going to settle with the Chairman of the USSR State Committee for Education G. Yagodin.

The birth of the Goskompriroda was more than 30 years late. The scientist-ecologists raised the issue of establishing the committee as early as 1955. Therefore, we have to take care of everything all at once—of the ideology of the system, and along with this, say, of how to give our employees an opportunity to join lengthy expeditions. After all, to this day they go on business trips as is done in the ministries.

Briefly about financing. Total expenditures for environmental protection in 1989 amount to 9.9 billion rubles, and in the United States \$80 billion. The budgetary allocation for the entire USSR Goskompriroda organization is 20 million rubles in 1989, and for the Environmental Protection Agency \$12 billion. Within our organization 5.5 million rubles are allocated for scientific research, and in the agency, \$450 million. For 1990 the allocation is \$500 million. Thus far our plans provide for the previous level. So here is the accounting...

[Dubrovskiy] However, you also had another option—not to accept the government offer. Incidentally, this is what several major scientists who received such offers did. Meanwhile, you agreed. Why?

[Vorontsov] I don't know. Why did I fight Lysenkoism in my time, though I could work in my profession as a zoologist rather than a genetics specialist? Because I could not do otherwise. It was my habit of getting involved in a fight, though, frankly, I do not like fighting much. However, I cannot stand by and watch when four people attack one...

I agreed because I felt ashamed for our great country.

Baklanov on Defense Sector Conversion

*PM1312104589 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian
9 Dec 89 Second Edition p 3*

[Interview with CPSU Central Committee Secretary O.D. Baklanov by A. Pokrovskiy: "Everything Begins With Man"; date, place of interview not specified]

[Text] [Pokrovskiy] Oleg Dmitriyevich, there is probably no one in our country who does not pin great hopes on the results of the perestroika processes in our economic organism. However, the following attitude to renewal can be seen in the speeches and articles of certain specialists: Let's adopt good laws, they claim, and all the troubles besetting our economy will simply disappear...

[Baklanov] And we can sit back and relax? In my opinion, this is precisely the most problematic posture. After all, if you adopt it, it means you are out of the