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History of the Russian Nuclear Weapons Program

#### History of the Russian Nuclear Weapon Program

Houston T. Hawkins Senior Fellow/Senior Scientist Principal Associate Directorate for Global Security Los Alamos National Laboratory Los Alamos, New Mexico



Yalta Conference February 4–11, 1945

Potsdam Conference was held at Potsdam, Occupied Germany. The Trinity test occurred on July 16, 1945 or the day before the conference began. Passed notes that "the baby was born," Truman and Churchill knew of the successful test. When informed by Truman, Stalin seemed unimpressed. Soviet espionage that had penetrated the joint US/UK atomic weapons program had already informed him.



Potsdam Conference, July17- August 2, 1945

История русской ядерной программы

### THE SOVIET PATH FORWARD VIA ESPIONAGE



#### USSR'S ATOMIC SPIES "TRACK FOUR" "ENORMOZ" (Russians term for the Manhattan Project)

(Background documents, declassified and used in Federal trial of Rosenbergs)





#### Персей Perseus

a. Joined the Manhattan Project in 1942

- b. Physicist passed information to the Cohens
- c. Associated with the Spanish Civil War
- d. Still alive and in the USA as of October 1992





#### PERSEUS Spionage in Los Alamos

#### aka Helen and Peter Kroger

Morris and Lona Cohen, handlers of Perseus, fled to the UK under the names Helen and Peter Kroger. After their arrest and prosecution in the UK, they were exchanged for Gerald Brooke and flown to Russia where they were welcomed as heroes.



#### George Koval Code Name "Delmar"



George Koval died in Moscow on 31 January 2006. His role was never officially recognized until 2 November 2007, when the Kremlin announced his posthumous decoration with the highest state honor, "Hero of Russia." Cited among his major contributions to the Soviet atomic project was the design of the "neutron fuse" for the first Soviet atomic device, which was tested on August 23, 1949. Koval was cited for "his courage and heroism while carrying out special missions and was the only Soviet intelligence officer to infiltrate the Manhattan Project's secret plants."



## DEVELOPMENTAL PATH DOWN TO JOE-1

# EARLY

История русской ядерной программы





### Contributions of Third Reich Knowledge and Materials



Rieh

**Gernot** Zippe

Leather Tanning Factory Neustadt am Glewe Auergesellshaft Plant Oranienburg

For the Soviet nuclear weapons program, the most significant contribution from the defeated Third Reich was the location and seizure of 300 tons of uranium, 100 tons from the heavily bombed Auergesellshaft plant in Oranienburg and 100 tons from a leather tanning factory in Neustadt am Glewe. This material was used to fuel Reactor "A" located in the Urals that provided plutonium for JOE-1. In addition, German scientists such as Nicholaus Riehl and Gernot Zippe provided the Russians with information on uranium metallurgy and enrichment. Likewise, captured German rocket technicians and rockets (such as the Wasser Fall) helped "jump start" the Russian IRBM and ICBM programs.

## Former Third Reich Scientists Who Assisted in the Russian Nuclear Weapons Program



Nicholas Riehl



Karl Zimmer



Robert Doepel



Manfred von Ardenne

Peter Thiessen



Max Volmer



Gernot Zippe



Heinz Barwich



Gustav Hertz

#### Design Department N11 aka Arzamas 16





#### Arzamas-16 Арзамас-16

**AKA Sarov** or **VNIIEF** 





## The pressure to test with a 100% chance of success.....

а лоне мисяце зака года сандается произвёдстве нервого ворына атациот банан.

Leven THINK THAT I High Explasive

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Tenn THT. (Recomposit maleshers geformer - 5-65). Menmueerss "[13]

#### Занасы антивного материала.

\*PACCEKREVEHO\* Capata security base or P 10

а) Урин-235. На апрель с/г быле дебите 25 инлеграмы Урин-235.
Кго добычи в настеплее время составляет 7,5 мг. в месяц.
а) Плутения (одемент 94). В присре-2 имеетоя 6,5 мг. плутения Ценучения его налажено, план дебичи перев.Полиметоя.

TEDO-ARADH - YORBENDE BERBERE YPERE (COMMERCIAL WORLD workings mas-- "province, 745 marshrongana an and ar

#### Ориентировочно варыв сандается 10 ниця с/г.

Touranus cupation coopalierent







Fuch's "Fat Man" Diagram

12



#### **KURCHATOV CITY**





From 1949 to 1993, at least 456 nuclear weapon tests were conducted in a remote part of eastern Kazakhstan, in the province of Semipalatinsk. Kurchatov City was the entry point for the three major test areas --- (1) Experimental Field where the first Russian test (Joe-1) occurred, (2) Balapan where atmospheric tests occurred, and (3) Degelen Mountain where underground tests were carried out. Locals called "Kurchatov City" "Haw Γορο∂" or "Our Town."



#### Kurchatov City (2013)





### Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria



Beria was appointed the administrative leader of the Soviet nuclear weapon program. *Kurchatov remained in charge of the scientific* research. Shortly after the atomic bombings of Japan in 1945, Stalin issued an ultimatum to Beria ordering the "bomb" to be built and tested within five years. NKVD Special Department "S" was established by Beria to organize intelligence documents gathered about the U.S. bomb and to accelerate the research efforts. The bomb was ready for testing within four years. The Russian scientists would have preferred testing their own design but opted for a copy of the US Trinity device because Beria had informed them that they would be executed if the test failed. 15



#### SHIPMENT OF JOE-1 DEVICE August 1949 TO SEMIPALATINSK BY RAIL





### JOE 1 Test

Data Collection Tower "Goose"







## JOE 1 Experimental Layout PLan





#### JOE-1 Test Layout Model Effects seem more important than the device





#### JOE-1\* First Lightning

#### 29 August 1949



РДС-1 (RDS-1 or Reaktivnyi Dvigatel Stalina) was a copy of the Trinity (Fat Man) device and demonstrated that Russia could manufacture and test nuclear weapons. As promised, executioners in black leather were in the bunker at the time of the test. The letter is from Beria and the scientists thanking Stalin for his leadership in the success. In the blue note at the top left, Stalin responded, "Where is Nicholas Riehl's signature?



#### **JOE-1** Control & Observation Bunker





### **JOE-1** Crater





### President Truman Announces Russian Test







Of interest -- one day before President Truman's announcement of the 1 September 1949 test-- an intelligence estimate produced by the CIA's Office of Research and Estimates (ORE) assessed that mid-1953 would be "the most probable date for a Soviet nuclear test." This assessment paper was coming off the presses when filter papers loaded with radiological debris from JOE-1 were being taken off AFLOAT-1 aircraft.







Energy (ke)

los

Doyle L. Northrup Donald H. Rock<sup>1</sup>

THE DETECTION OF JOE 1

Alert 112 began just like many of the previous 111 sounded in the Long Range Detection System. A field unit reported on 3 September 1949 that a filter paper exposed for three hours at 18,000 feet on a weather plane flying from Japan to Alaska showed a radioactivity of 85 counts per minute, 35 counts over the recently halved official threshold of significance. But this time the slight indication was to trigger a massive reaction.

Before it was over, the Air Weather Service had mounted 92 special air sampling flights from Guam to the North Pole and from Japan to the British Isles. As the radioactive cloud moved east, British authorities were alerted and the RAF flew missions from Gibraltar to 70°N latitude. Other samples were taken by fixed air sampling stations in the Far East and North America and by Navy rainwater stations in North America.

Analyses of the air filter samples by Air Force's contractor Tracerlab and the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory provided unambiguous evidence that the Soviets had succeeded in detonating a plutonium bomb. The rainwater samples, analyzed by the Naval Research Laboratory, the Los Alamos lab, and the University of California Radiation Laboratory, later told more about the nature and timing of the shot. The U.S. conclusion was independently confirmed by the British sampling and radiochemical analysis.

Considering the distances involved, Oppenheimer had believed it highly unlikely that debris from a Soviet nuclear test could be detected.

E./u







ИсториЯ русской ядерной программы

## NUCLEAR WEAPON TESTING AFTER JOE-1







#### Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test Site







#### Degelen Gora Nuclear Test Site

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kPLQ4yEXFPc



#### Novaya Zemlya Nuclear Test Site













#### Novaya Zemlya Nuclear Test Site Support Base





## Novaya Zemlya Nuclear Test Site





#### Novaya Zemlya Nuclear Test Site (cont'd)





#### Joe-2 Uranium Implosion, Tritium Boosted 3<sup>8 KT</sup> 24 September

It is likely that the Joe-2 design was provided to the Chinese. From 1958 until 1959, Arzamas-16 weaponeers led by Colonel E. A. Negin, N. G. Maslov and V. Gavrilov were assigned to China and provided the Chinese with extensive information on 1950vintage fission weapons. Qian Sanqiang was the primary interface.

After Klaus Fuchs was released from prison on 23 Jun 1959 and moved to East Germany, he met with Qian and authenticated the design information Russia had given to China.



CHIC 1: 16 OCT/64, 20 KT, TOWER, FISSION DEVICE IMPLOSION OF U-235 CORE, BUT WITHOUT TRITIUM BOOST



#### JOE-3 First Soviet Airdropped Test 41.2 KT 18 October 1951




# JOE-4 "Layer Cake"

12 August 1953

400 KT



\*RDS-6c employed a design called the Слойка, a type of layer cake.



## **ЈОЕ-5** .РДС-4

The RDS-4 (JOE-5) design would also be introduced into the Russian arsenal as the warhead for the R-5M medium-range ballistic missile 23 Aug

23 August 1953



RDS-4 (JOE-5) was a fission device using plutonium in a "levitated" core design. The test was an air drop on August 23, 1953, yielding 28 KT.



## JOE-8 TOTSKOYE RANGE, ORENBERG РДС-6 Exercise "Snezhok" (Snowball) 14 September 1953

First Soviet nuclear explosion in a military training exercise involved ~45,000 troops. Totskoye Range, the location for Snezhok was ch<u>osen</u> because its topography was similarity to West Germany. Regrettably for the Russians, wind carried the airdropped device and its detonation debris toward the participants. Thousands of Russian soldiers were contaminated.





### Guba Chernaya, Novaya Zemlya

#### 21 September 1955



The first test of the РДС-9 design on 19/10/1954 was a fissile.

# JOE-19 STAGED THERMONUCLEAR DEVICE РДС-37 Бинарная 3.0 MT > 1.6 MT 22 November 1955







Utilized "staged, radiation implosion" called "Sakharov's Third Idea"



## **JOE-111 Tsar Bomb** Ан-602 Царь-бомба ~50 МТ

30 October 1961





## Chagan PNE "Atomic Lake" "Industrial Nuclear Explosion" 140 КТ - 15 January 1965





# Aggregate Declared and Detected Tests 1945-2013

#### Worldwide nuclear testing, 1945 - 2013



## Russian Nuclear Weapon Complex



# Russian Nuclear Weapon Complex

Sarov, Arzamas-16, Sarova, Avangard Nuclear Weapon Physics/Design, Nuclear Weapon Assembly/Disassembly Snezhinsk, Chelyabinsk-70, Kasli Nuclear Weapon Physics/Design Ozersk, Mayak, Chelyabinsk-65 (40) Plutonium Production, Tritium **Production, Weapon Component Fabrication** Zelenogorsk, Krasnoyarsk-26, Dodonovo Plutonium Production Tomsk-7, Seversk Plutonium Production, Uranium Enrichment Zelenogorsk, Krasnoyarsk-45, Uranium Enrichment Angarsk, Uranium Enrichment Novoural'sk, Sverdlovsk-44 Uranium Enrichment Zarechny, Penza-19 Nuclear Weapon Assembly/Disassembly Lesnoy, Sverdlovsk-45, Nuclear Weapon Assembly/Disassembly, Weapon **Component Fabrication** Tryokhgorny, Zlatoust-36 Nuclear Weapon Assembly/Disassembly Novaya Zemlya Nuclear Test Site (former Semipalatinsk, Degelen Gora)

# RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTES







## Sarov ARZAMAS-16 VNIIEF



#### ALL-RUSSIAN RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF EXPERIMENTAL PHYSICS



- Founded 1946 at Sarov (Arzamas-16)
- Stewardship of the Russian nuclear stockpile and improved efficiency, safety and reliability of nuclear warheads
- Development of combined computer simulation methods for various physics phenomena using advanced highperformance computing systems
- Advanced design methods for complex engineering systems
- Hydrodynamics of transients, detonation physics and technology;
- Nuclear physics and radiation physics
- Development and operation of research reactors for the purposes of science
- Development and operation of technologies for control and accountability of nuclear materials
- Science and technology support of the international arms limitation and nuclear nonproliferation treaties











# Facilities Arzamas-16 / 2012







# Rocket Sled Facility Arzamas-16 / 2012



## Arzamas-16 Museum





## Arzamas-16 Museum

## First mass-produced tactical nuclear bomb - "RDS-4"

2 MT Warhead

#### 152mm Nuclear Shell

R-7 ICBM Warhead NATO SS-6 Sapwood IRBM 40 KT Warhead

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## **CHELYABINSK-70 VNIITF**



ALL-RUSSIAN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF TECHNICAL PHYSICS





### Lenin Square Snezhinsk

**First** VNIITF Director **D.E.**Vasilyev

Simonenko

- Founded 1955 at Snezhinsk
- Stewardship of the Russian nuclear stockpile and improved efficiency, safety and reliability of nuclear warheads
- Properties of substances in a wide range of pressures and temperatures
- Kinetics of explosives
- Thermonuclear reactions
- **Plasma physics**
- **Turbulent** mixing
- Gas dynamics
- Inertial thermonuclear fusion
- Physics of the interaction of laser radiation with matter
- Astrophysics
- Computational mathematical modeling.

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## Kasli (Касли) CHELYABINSK-70 VNIITF



#### ALL-RUSSIAN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF TECHNICAL PHYSICS



#### **Artillery Shell**

1.2

KASLI ---VNIIETF

**Surface to Air** 

同

**SLBM Warhead** 

#### **ICBM Warhead**

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Russian Mass Produced Strategic Bomb



### **KASLI ---VNIIETF**











## Nikolai L Dukhov Institute of Automatics VNIIA



All-Russian Research Institute of Automatics









## FISSILE MATERIAL PRODUCTION FACILITIES

История русской ядерной программы



# Mayak Plutonium Recovery & Conversion Facility



## Zheleznogorsk Plutonium Production KRASNOYARSK-26





## Zheleznogorsk Plutonium Production KRASNOYARSK-26 "DODONOVA"







## Seversk Plutonium Production TOMSK-7





# Angarsk Electrolysis Chemical Complex (Uranium Enrichment)



## Novoural'sk Uranium Enrichment sverdlovsk-44



## Zelenogorsk Uranium Enrichment KRASNOYARSK-45





## Seversk Siberian Chemical Combine TOMSK-7 URANIUM ENRICHMENT



# **RBMK** Ancilliary Tritium Production from RBMKs





"High Power Channel-type *Reactors*"



# WEAPON PARTS PRODUCTION FACILITIES





# Mayak Pit Facility SECTION OF CHELYABINSK







Arzamas Avangard Warhead Assembly/ Disassembly Facility



Road to Rail Transfer Point





## Kasli (Касли) Area 9 CHELYABINSK-70 VNIITF




#### Trekhgorny Weapon Parts/Assembly ZLATOUST-36





#### Lesnoy Weapon Parts/Assembly sverdlovsк-45 Лесной







#### Zarechny Weapon Parts/Assembly (PENZA-19)



ЗАРЕЧНЫЙ

# RUSSIAN NUCLEAR WEAPONS







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# NUCLEAR WEAPON DELIVERY SYSTEMS





R-9 - SS-8 SASIN





# Russian Strategic Bombers

Tupolev Tu-4 (NATO codenamed 'Bull')

TU-95MS Bear

TU-60 Strategic Bomber

TU-22M3 Strategic Bomber

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### The Wasser Fall Legacy



The Wasser Fall was designed as an anti-aircraft weapon and was used several times to destroy Allied bombers amassed in formations. With the fall of the Third Reich, Wasser Fall missiles, parts, production equipment, and the technicians who operated the German production line were relocated to the Soviet Union.



# Evolution of Russian Missles to the R-7

R-7 (SS-6 Sapwood)

R-7A







R-7 was in service from 1960 to 1968 from four pads at Plesetsk and one at Baikonur (warhead RDS - 46.5 MT)

R-7 Warhead

R-7



Mod 4



## Russian Land Based ICBMs







#### R-36M SS-18 SATAN

(8F675 Mod2) 20 MT warhead for R-36M2 / SS-18 Satan ICBM (single)

(8F021 2) 5 MT warheads for R-36MP / SS-18 Satan ICBM (3 MIRV warheads)

(R-36 MUTTh Mod 4) 550 KT warheads for R-36M2 / SS-18 Satan ICBM (10 MIRV warheads)

(R-36M2 Воевода Mod 5) 10 MIRVed 750 KT warheads )

Russia is developing a new heavy ICBM



## Road Mobile Topol Sickle Launch









RT-23 / SS-24 Scalpel ICBMs had 10 MIRV warheads with design yields of 550 KT. The system was extremely heavy, so heavy that it caused extensive rail damage when deployed. This problem likely was one reason the Russians agreed to retire the RT-23 under the SALT agreement.





Deputy Defense Minister Yury Borisov announced that the Moscow Institute of Thermal Technology (MITT) was developing a new, lighter weight rail-mobile ICBM system, permitted with the end of START. This upgrade eliminates the damage to railroads caused by the RT-23. According to public Russian statements, the nuclear warheads will be of a new design that will be significantly hardened to nuclear effects.

# RS-24 Yars (NATO SS-29)



RS-24 Yars (NATO SS-29) is heavier than the Topal-M and can be deployed in both silo and road mobile. Yars could be capable of delivering 10 independently targetable RVs and entered service July 2010.



Moscow Institute of Thermal Technology



## Road Mobile Topol-M (RS-12 M2) SS27 Sickle B



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Per Russian Strategic Missile Force Commander, Lt. Gen. Sergei Karakayev, Russia plans to replace its single-warhead mobile RS-12M2 Topol-M intercontinental strategic missile system with a new Topol missile that can carry up to four, independentlytargetted, nuclear warheads.

#### The New Roadmobile Version of the RS-24 Yars







#### 139m long/12m beam





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# Delta IV SSBN (involved in Murmansk Fire, 29 Dec 2011)



Yekaterinburg Delta IV SSBN in 2011 Murmansk Fire

# Project 941 Akula, SS-N-20 Missiles

Typhoon Class SSBN

#### 175m long/23m beam











# **New Borei-Class SSBN** and New Bulava SLBMs

Bulava-30 **SLBM** 

7

Automobile

Bulava-M, Bulava-30, Bulava-47



170m long/13.5m beam

- -

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#### **2013 Major Russian Strategic Exercises**



President Putin was personally involved in the exercises











### Reemergence of Confrontational Strategies

<image>

2008 Faker tracks resume to test and evaluated US defense posture and capabilities 2009 Russian nuclear submarine patrols off US coasts resume (Sierra-2)



#### TO CLOSE: RUSSIA VALUES ITS NUCLEAR WEAPON PROGRAM AND IS CONTINUING MAJOR NUCLEAR FORCE IMPROVEMENTS

- The Russian nuclear weapons complex has downsized while modernizing within a smaller and more efficient footprint.
- Emphasis is being placed on modernizing Russian nuclear warheads, missiles, and serial production capacities.
- Significant year-around experimentation with very large parks of instrumentation vans is constantly occurred at the Novaya Zemlya UGT Site.
- In late 2012, Russia ended the Nunn-Lugar program that had focused on safeguarding SNM and converting it to peaceful use.
- The majority of funds in the 'Russian' defense program up through 2015 will be spent on modernizing Russian strategic nuclear forces.\*

\*Russian Deputy Defense Minister A. Moltensky

