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\*\*\* BEGIN MESSAGE 27 \*\*\*

SERIAL=PM1704132591 UDN=X(52912)  
 CLASS=UNCLAS 3S/FAX  
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 SERIAL: PM1704132591  
 PASS: COPY TO [REDACTED]  
 COUNTRY: USSR  
 SUBJ: DIVERGING OPINIONS ON CAUSE OF SASOVO EXPLOSION  
 REF: LD1204142191 MOSCOW TASS ENGLISH 121303 -- 'STRANGE ROAR'  
 PRECEDES 'MYSTERIOUS BLAST' IN SASOVO  
 SOURCE: MOSCOW PRAVDA IN RUSSIAN 15 APR 91 FIRST EDITION P 3  
 TEXT:

//((CORRESPONDENT N. KIREYEV REPORT: "INCIDENTS: SALTPETER  
 BLOWN UP FROM UFO?"))

((TEXT)) RYAZAN OBLAST -- A HIGHLY POWERFUL EXPLOSION RANG OUT  
 AT MIDNIGHT 12 APRIL NEAR THE SMALL CITY OF SASOVO IN THE RYAZAN  
 AREA. THE SHOCK WAVE ROARED DOWN ITS STREETS, RIPPING OFF ROOFS IN  
 SOME AREAS AND KNOCKING OUT WINDOWS -- EVEN THE FRAMES -- IN A GOOD  
 HALF OF THE APARTMENT BLOCKS, BUILDINGS, AND STRUCTURES. ACCORDING  
 TO EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS, MULTISTORY BLOCKS ROCKED AS IN AN  
 EARTHQUAKE.

THE ALARMED RESIDENTS COULD NOT RECOVER THEIR COMPOSURE BEFORE  
 MORNING, LOST IN CONJECTURE AS TO WHAT HAD HAPPENED. INCIDENTALLY,  
 NO ONE SUFFERED SERIOUS INJURY ALTHOUGH THERE WERE VISITS TO  
 MEDICAL INSTITUTIONS: SOME PEOPLE WERE IN SHOCK AND SOME HAD BEEN  
 CUT BY BROKEN GLASS...

KINDERGARTENS AND SCHOOLS WERE TEMPORARILY NONOPERATIONAL.  
 DRAFTS BLEW THROUGH BUILDINGS BEFORE THE FRAMES WERE COVERED WITH  
 POLYTHENE FILM.

"THE POPULATION IS NOW LESS WORRIED ABOUT THE RESULTS OF THE  
 INCIDENT," A, ROZHKOVA, CHAIRMAN OF SASOVSKIY RAYON SOVIET OF  
 PEOPLE'S DEPUTIES AND PARTY RAYKOM ((RAYON PARTY COMMITTEE)) FIRST  
 SECRETARY, BELIEVES, "THAN BY THE UNCERTAINTY. IT IS STILL UNCLEAR  
 WHAT CAUSED THE EXPLOSION. SOME PEOPLE ARE TALKING ABOUT MUNITIONS  
 LEFT BURIED SINCE THE LAST WAR, WHILE OTHERS CLAIM THAT A POWERFUL  
 AIR BOMB FELL, A THIRD GROUP BLAME IT ON A METEORITE, AND A FOURTH  
 GROUP BLAME UFO'S... THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO SUPPOSEDLY SAW A MOVING  
 FIERY SPHERE."

"MILITARY MEN WHO VISITED THE SCENE OF THE EXPLOSION," ANATOLIY  
 FEDOROVICH WENT ON, "PUT FORWARD THEIR OWN HYPOTHESIS: THEY SAY  
 THAT AMMONIUM NITRATE EXPLODED. WE DO NOT KNOW WHOM AND WHAT TO  
 BELIEVE. ONE THING IS REASSURING: NO VARIATIONS IN THE RADIATION  
 BACKGROUND AND THE COMPOSITION OF THE ATMOSPHERE HAVE BEEN  
 DETECTED. WE ARE WAITING FOR SPECIALISTS FROM THE USSR ACADEMY OF  
 SCIENCES AND FOR THE RESULTS OF A CHEMICAL AND PHYSICAL ANALYSIS."

CERTAINLY, THE CAUSE OF THE EXPLOSION IS STILL A MYSTERY  
 ALTHOUGH THE CRATER 1 KM FROM THE CITY, 28 METERS IN DIAMETER, AND  
 ROUGHLY 4 METERS DEEP IS, REGRETTABLY, A REALITY. ALONGSIDE THERE  
 WERE 30 TONNES OF FRESH AMMONIUM NITRATE WHICH WAS BROUGHT TO THE  
 FIELD 5 APRIL TO FERTILIZE THE PLANTS. BUT CROP FARMERS HAVE,  
 AFTER ALL, SUCCESSFULLY USED THIS FERTILIZER FOR SEVERAL YEARS NOW  
 THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY AND ABROAD. LOCAL AGRICULTURAL CHEMISTRY  
 WAREHOUSES CONTAIN 10,000 TONNES OF SALTPETER FROM THE CONSIGNMENT

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Approved for Release  
 Date MAY 2000

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THAT EXPLODED. THANK GOD, ALL IS QUIET THERE.

THE INVESTIGATION SHOULD ULTIMATELY SHED LIGHT ON THE SASOVO  
"WONDER EXPLOSION."

(ENDALL) 15 APR [REDACTED] 17/1342Z APR

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