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*** BEGIN MESSAGE 27 ***

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SERIAL: PM1704132591
PASS: COPY TO
COUNTRY: USSR
SUBJ: DIVERGING OPINIONS ON CAUSE OF SASOVO EXPLOSION
REF: LD1204142191 MOSCOW TASS ENGLISH 121303

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. ROZHKOV, CHAIRMAN OF SASOVOISKI 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, 26 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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THAT EXPLODED. THANK GOD, ALL IS QUIET THERE.

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

(ENDALL) 15 APR 17/1342Z APR
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