



February 18, 2002

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Headline News

Russian Nuclear Sites Unguarded

**NewsMax.com Wires**  
**Saturday, Feb. 16, 2002**

MOSCOW – A legislator warned Friday that Russia's nuclear waste sites were unguarded, posing a significant security threat to the world.

Sergei Mitrokhin, a member of the liberal Yabloko Party, announced that he and two activists from Greenpeace had entered a high-security nuclear-waste processing plant in Zheleznogorsk, near the city of Krasnoyarsk in eastern Siberia, unhindered, proving an "appalling lack of security."

Mitrokhin told reporters that Russia's system of nuclear safety could be best described as "nonexistent," warning that terrorist groups could easily gain access to nuclear waste being processed at the facility.

"I was shocked by what I saw," Mitrokhin said. "Anyone can approach the site, which contains dangerous materials, and do whatever they like."

Russia is estimated to have accumulated 14,000 tons of nuclear waste from its reactors and scrapped weapons, with more than 3,000 tons of nuclear fuel said to be stored at the facility in the Krasnoyarsk region.

Mitrokhin's announcement appeared timed to influence the debate in the State Duma, the lower house of parliament, of a bill on the creation of a panel to oversee the import of nuclear waste to Russia from other countries.

Mitrokhin said Russia was not ready to accept spent nuclear fuel from foreign sources, and stressed that Russia's 96 nuclear facilities and research centers were underfinanced and lacked proper security.

Last July, President Vladimir Putin signed into law a bill allowing Russia to import as much as 20,000 tons of spent fuel in a project estimated to earn the country more than \$20 billion over the next 10 years. The law has attracted widespread condemnation among environmentalists, and Yabloko has lobbied to block the plan's implementation.

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