

ENVIRONMENT

Reports of a Nuclear "Burial Ground" on the Kola Peninsula

From our correspondent at the press centres of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

G. Gerasimov, head of the Information Service of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MID), spoke at a regular briefing for Soviet and foreign journalists.

He said that the question of the possible burial of radioactive wastes is still the focus of attention for the mass media in Norway. A number of articles and commentaries have reported claims about nuclear "burial grounds" located somewhere between Murmansk and the Norwegian border. But earlier at the briefing the USSR MID spokesman declared unequivocally: no burial sites for wastes of this type exist in the area in question. Soviet representatives also circulated through Academy of Sciences channels an interview with Aleksandr Mikhailov, chief radiological specialist of the Murmansk Committee on the Protection of Nature and chairman of the Murmansk Oblast Executive Committee's Commission on Radiation Safety. The interview was occasioned by growing public concern in Murmansk Oblast over recurring talk of plans to build disposal sites for nuclear wastes on the Kola Peninsula. In it, it is stressed that the issue of building a single inter-agency regional storage site for radioactive wastes is being examined at government level. A decision in principle on this matter has already been taken, although no specific site for the future facility has as yet been selected. Among the possible sites being considered are Novaya Zemlya and the Kola Peninsula. As for the existence of some sort of "burial grounds" on the Kola Peninsula at this time, there are none. In this region there are only temporary storage sites for nuclear and radioactive wastes. One such site is located at the Kola Nuclear Electric Power Plant directly inside the plant's reactor room.