

To: Dmitry Medvedev, President of the Russian Federation To: Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister of the Russian Federation,

To: Angela Merkel, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany

Dear Madam and Sirs,

World War II ended 63 years ago. It took almost six years to overcome fascism in Europe. But two recent decades in the late 20th-early 21st centuries were not enough to persuade the European and the US bureaucracies to put an end to the most tragic period of the World War II.

I am referring to one of the most topical problems: the disposal of hundreds of thousand tons of Wehrmacht chemical warfare agents and chemical weapons from the anti-Hitler coalition (the USSR, the USA and Great Britain) in areas of the Baltic Sea and the North Sea.

The Wehrmacht's chemical weapons were dumped from 1945-1947 by the USSR (12%) and by the USA and Great Britain (88%). There is no data on how much of these countries' own chemical weapons was disposed of. According to some data, chemical weapons were being dumped in the Baltic Sea until 1978.

As a successor to the Soviet Union, Russia in 1991 breached the conspiracy of silence around this issue and disclosed around twenty documents issued by the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Soviet Union which shed light on an operation disposing of captured and own chemical weapons. **The USA and Great Britain, on the contrary, in 1997 extended the security classification to 2017 on materials related to this operation including volumes, types, locations and means of disposal.**

It is worth pointing out that the methods of disposal differed. While the Soviet Naval Forces disposed of the chemical weapons by spreading them in large water areas, the US Naval Forces and British Royal Navy filled the holds of captured ships of various classes, brought the ships to sea and scuttled them through demolition. Thus a massive amount of chemical agents accumulated at the bottom of the sea, in an aggressive sea environment.

Thanks to the efforts of Russian scientists in recent years, **around 30 sunken ships with**

chemical weapons on board

have

been found in the Baltic Sea. Traces have been found in the water and in the ground (at considerable distances from disposal areas) in Skagerrak strait 20 miles away from

Lysekil

, a Swedish sea port, and near

the Island of Bornholm

, Denmark. Among chemical warfare agents found in this area were mustard gas, lewisite, sarin and soman. In some places the concentration of arsenicum in a kilogram of soil reaches tragically high levels.

In recent decades munition casings have been attacked by corrosion; chemical warfare agents have leaked into the water. A major blowout of chemical warfare agents may occur anytime.

Practically all chemical warfare agents represent strong mutagens and carcinogens, even in trace concentrations not registered by the latest equipment. Given that intensive fishing is carried out by all Baltic states in the areas where sunken ships with chemical weapons on board were found, there is a probability of transfer of chemical warfare agents and their breakdown products to humans. This may cause physical and mental abnormalities for two-four generations. Currently scientists are seeing a socially significant increase in the number of oncologic and other devastating diseases.

Sunken ships with chemical weapons on board have become more dangerous with regard to terrorist attacks which have become more frequent in recent times. The blasting of one or two such ships could lead to an unprecedented environmental catastrophe, a breakdown of the fishery, tourism and leisure industries, and to economic and political collapse. The situation is worsening every day, and there is no hope for its improvement without taking urgent measures in this field.

The issue of demilitarization of the seabed has been under a strict ban; it became a taboo subject after World War II. This conspiracy of silence persists today. However a new situation has emerged. Russia's Gazprom and Germany's BASF and E-on have begun implementing a new project: Nord Stream, a gas pipeline to link Russia's Vyborg and Germany's Greifswald through the Baltic Sea. The 1,200 km. pipeline will be laid across places where chemical warfare agents were disposed of.

This brings up the question: when the authorities' self-preservation instinct will work? People

can ask the Baltic states' parliaments and government members: "Did you know of the real situation? If you did not know you did not fulfill your functions; if you did know why did you accept your posts?"

The problem of a lie emerged in connection with this situation in addition to the secrecy. The Russian media are publishing articles and interviews with high ranked officials stating that there is no problem at the sea bottom at all. The officials of such a high rank should understand that they take on a big responsibility if they misinform the European and global publics either with or without intent.

The international foundations Clean Baltic (Estonia) and World Ocean (Russia) jointly and separately are trying to break a wall of silence around this problem. They have published articles, memoranda, addresses to the parliaments and governments of the countries which should have been interested in resolving this issue, they have produced documentaries, formed governmental commissions (which have been closed quite quickly), called international symposia and conferences, organized scientific and research expeditions to the Baltic region and North Sea. But all this has been in vain.

It is worth raising the following questions basing on the current situation and the information described above:

- 1. Who should put an end to the most tragic period of the World War II given the lethal risk of submerged chemical weapons?**
- 2. Do the USA and Great Britain have a moral right to conceal the data on dumped Wehrmacht and own chemical weapons on the grounds of secrecy and the lack of technologies for utilization of chemical weapons during that period of time?**
- 3. Do they recognize the danger to which Europe and all the world are being exposed?**
- 4. Do they not agree that Chernobyl represents the most frightful memorial to human carelessness and political passivity, dispiriting evidence of global environmental ill-being, a serious warning to the human race? Do they not think that a danger to mankind should be immediately eliminated by all scientific and technical means?**

There is the only solution in such a situation: to publish a proclamation to the global public, to the governments of Europe and the USA, the EU and OSCE member states in order to unite efforts for the preservation of sea environment from chemical warfare agent contamination, for

the protection of the health of the region's inhabitants and their descendants, and for the protection of the world's oceans in general.

In July 2007 a Baltic Proclamation was published in the media and placed on the Clean Baltic Foundation web site. The Proclamation is enclosed. I expect that the document has been read by high ranking officials of several European countries, the USA and Great Britain. However there was no reaction to the Proclamation. It seems a reaction will follow only when some problem emerges; but probably that will be too late.

For instance here is a fact which is typical: the text of the Baltic Proclamation had been signed by the director of Berlin International Institute of Baltic and North Seas' Security Problems, but later he withdrew his signature under the influence of some persons.

European nations prefer to know the truth even if it is quite grim. We do not have time for lies. We do not have time to be blind to the real state of affairs. The collective security of a united Europe needs relevant collective responsibility.

Russia has technologies and knowhow which can resolve the problem described above within a reasonable period; the expenditures for that activities will be less than the loss of the region's countries if a major blowout of chemical warfare agents occurs.

Those countries of the G8, namely Russia as a successor of the USSR, the USA, Great Britain and Germany which directly initiated the disposal of World War II chemical weapons, must be initiators of demilitarization of the Baltic and North Seas seabeds. Chemical weapons dumped in the Baltic and North Seas represent a delayed action mine with countdown which began in 1945. No one knows when it explodes.

The first step in this direction should be support for the Baltic Proclamation by Russia, the USA, Great Britain and Germany.

Arnold Pork

President-Founder of Clean Baltic Foundation

Tallinn - Moscow

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Contacts in Moscow: +7 962 933 2200, +7 985 960 0722

E-mail: arnold-po@mail.ru

Web site: www.cleanbaltic.org