The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Nuclear Weapons 'Saved' Russia – Patriarch Kirill

October 18, 2023



Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia. **Oleg Varov / patriarhia.ru**

Russia's nuclear weapons "saved" the country, Patriarch Kirill, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, said Wednesday.

"Were it not for the work of [Soviet atomic bomb creator Igor] Kurchatov and his colleagues, it is difficult to say if our country would still exist," Patriarch Kirill said.

His comments came as he presented a Church honor to physicist Radiy Ilkaev, who heads the Kurchatov-founded Russian Federal Nuclear Center in Sarov.

Related article: Russian Orthodox Church Establishes 'Head Military Priest' Post

Soviet scientists "created weapons under the protection of St. Seraphim of Sarov, because, by the ineffable providence of God, these weapons were created in the monastery of St. Seraphim," Kirill said.

The first successful test of the Soviet atomic bomb, RDS-1, was carried out on Aug. 29, 1949, in the Semipalatinsk region of Kazakhstan.

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Russia currently has an arsenal of 4,489 nuclear warheads, 1,674 of which are deployed. The United States has a smaller overall arsenal at 3,708 warheads, but more of its warheads, 1,770, are ready for use.

Patriarch Kirill is a staunch backer of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine and dozens of Orthodox priests have been sent to the front to support Russian troops.

In April, he established a new senior ecclesiastical position to oversee the Church's activities in Ukrainian territories where Russia is waging war.

The Church in 2020 proposed guidelines advising priests against their long-held practice of blessing nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. In May 2022, an archpriest said the guidelines, which are still in draft form, would "in no way" change this practice.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/10/18/nuclear-weapons-saved-russia-patriarch-kirill-a82810