



January 25, 1946
**Handwritten notes by Igor V. Kurchatov, Director of the
Soviet Nuclear Program, on a Meeting with Stalin, Beria
and Molotov**

Citation:

“Handwritten notes by Igor V. Kurchatov, Director of the Soviet Nuclear Program, on a Meeting with Stalin, Beria and Molotov,” January 25, 1946, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Personal notes of I.V. Kurchatov, Archive of the Russian Scientific Center “Kurchatov Institute,” Fond 2, Opis 1/c, Document 16/4, printed in Yuri Smirnov, “Stalin and the Atomic Bomb,” *Voprosy istorii estestvoznaniia i tekhniki* [Questions on the History of Science and Technology] 2 (1994), pp. 125-130. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115922>

Summary:

Excerpts from Igor V. Kurchatov's handwritten notes from a conversation with Stalin on the secret Soviet nuclear project, accompanied by Beria and Foreign Minister V.M. Molotov, at the Kremlin on the evening of 25 January 1946.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from the Leon Levy Foundation.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

- English Translation

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The conversation continued for approximately one hour, from 7:30 to 8:30 in the evening. Comrade Stalin, Comrade Molotov, and Comrade Beria attended.

Basic impressions of the conversation. The great love of Comrade Stalin for Russia and for V.I. Lenin, about whom he spoke in terms of his great hope for the development of science in our country. [...]

Viewing the future development of the work Comrade Stalin said that it is not worth spending time and effort on small-scale work, rather, it is necessary to conduct the work broadly, on a Russian scale, and that in this regard the broadest, utmost assistance will be provided.

Comrade Stalin said that it is not necessary to seek out the cheapest paths, ... that it is not necessary to carry out the work quickly and in vulgar fundamental forms.

Regarding the scholars, Comrade Stalin was preoccupied by thoughts of how to, as if, make it easier, help them in their material-living situation. And in prizes for great deeds, for example, on the solution to our problem. He said that our scholars are very modest, and they never notice that they live badly—that is bad in itself, and he said that although our state also had suffered much, we can always make it possible for several thousand persons to live well, and several thousand people better than very well, with their own dachas, so that they can relax, and with their own cars.

In work, Comrade Stalin said, it is necessary to move decisively, with the investment of a decisive quantity of resources, but in the basic directions.

It is also necessary to use Germany to the utmost; there, there are people, and equipment, and experience, and factories. Comrade Stalin asked about the work of German scholars and the benefits which they brought to us.

[. . .]

A question was asked about [physicists A.F.] Ioffe, [A.I.] Alikhanov, [P.L.] Kapitsa, and [S.I.] Vavilov, and the utility of Kapitsa's work.

Misgivings were expressed regarding who they work for and what their activity is directed toward—for the benefit of the Motherland or not.

It was suggested that measures which would be necessary in order to speed up work, everything that is necessary, should be written down. What other scholars would it make sense to bring into the effort?

[. . .]