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REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA
MINISTRY OF ECONOMY
A. I. ALIKHANYAN NATIONAL
SCIENCE LABORATORY
STATE NON COMMERCIAL
ORGANIZATION

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Dear Colleagues,

Thank you very much for your mail and interest in the future of our institute.

As you mentioned in your letter last 20 years were dramatic for Yerevan Physics Institute. War conditions, abrupt cut in funding, and the absence of any support from the Armenian government changed the mentality of our fellow scientists and employees. Each group and individual tried to find his own niche to survive. Due to our strong international connections many groups in theory, high energy experimental physics and astrophysics became part of many important collaborations and continue active participate in research projects abroad and in Armenia. I can refer to Thompson's citation index to demonstrate that our institute is still among 100 best (according to this parameter) high energy physics institutions.

However the institute's main accelerator 6-GeV electron synchrotron was operated only 2 months during 20 years and is not operational any more. 2 years ago Armenian government invited an international commission formed by world leading scientists (you can see the documents on the work of commission in our site) for discussing future of institute. The commission highly evaluated the institute, naming it as a major Armenian asset for scientific development and innovation and recommended to turn it to national lab and to double its budget. It takes 1.5 years until the Armenian government could fulfill this decision and now we have become the Artem Alikhanyan national lab (ANL). The mission of this laboratory is to conduct advanced research and technology. The trade-off is that we will pay special attention to science and technology issues of concern for the nation, such as health care.

To keep the scientific program of ANL up-to-date and to fulfill the ANL mission, the Armenian government has established an international scientific advisory board headed by Yuri Oganessian from Florov institute, JINR, Dubna. The first session of the SAB finished at 18 April, 2011 and now we are waiting the recommendations on our research program.

The employees of ANL submitted ~ 40 research projects in the different fields of science. The theoreticians were very active and present 12 projects.

After receiving SAB recommendation we'll decide on the research directions of ANL.

Sure, theory will remain one of the main scientific topics of the ANL.

It was and, as you mentioned in your letter, remains one of the best assets of Armenian science. However, I cannot say the same about accelerator physics in Armenia. It started in 1960ies by our first director, Artem Alikhanyan, and was one of the highest achievements of the scientific and technological development of Armenia. Now it is in miserable state:

Synchrotron is not operable, mean age of accelerator division employees approaches 70, there are no PhD students. To address this topic, the SAB recommends starting with new machines: small cyclotron for the short leaving isotope production and ion beam machine for the nuclear therapy. In this way, we'll establish in the ANL the center of nuclear medicine (it is decision of the Armenian government). Of course, we'll use this machine also for experimentation in nuclear physics with emphasis on nuclear medicine. We think that it will be rather favorable development of the accelerator physics in ANL. Believe me, our government will be never able to fund new accelerator center project for pure fundamental science.

I optimistically estimate the present status of ANL; seems we overcome continuous decline of last 20 years and we are ready to go ahead incorporating willingness and qualification of our employees. Of course, for the laboratory to succeed in its goals, we need high level of integrity, active participation and devotion from our employees.

I'll keep you informed on future development and invite you to visit us on any occasion,

Best regards, Ashot Chilingarian

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ashot Chilingarian', written in a cursive style. The signature is enclosed within a large, sweeping oval flourish that extends downwards and to the right.