



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to Ukrainian Deputy Minister for Emergency Situations and for the Protection of the Population from the Consequences of the Chornobyl Catastrophe

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Kyle Scott
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
May 4, 2006

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The United States would like to very much join other delegations in welcoming Deputy Minister Kholosha to the Permanent Council, and thanks him for his address.

On the twentieth anniversary of the Chornobyl nuclear disaster, we join other delegations in expressing our deepest condolences for this tragedy. Today we remember the victims of this horrible accident and recognize those who still suffer great hardship in its aftermath.

By closing Chornobyl more than five years ago, an independent Ukraine removed an environmental threat. We welcome that decision.

The United States continues to support efforts to deal with the effects of the accident. We are the largest single country donor to the Chornobyl shelter fund, with a pledge of 203 million dollars. The United States has provided over 30 million dollars for the construction of the Chornobyl Replacement Heat Plant. We have provided more than 400 million dollars for enhancing nuclear safety in Ukrainian reactors.

On the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the disaster, the U.S. Department of State sponsored the delivery to Ukraine on April 20 of humanitarian aid valued at nearly 2 million dollars of medical supplies from the U.S.-based Children of Chornobyl Relief and Development Fund. The supplies and medicine are being distributed to hospitals in Ukraine for patients suffering from the effects of the accident. Likewise, on April 28 of this year, the U.S. Department of State supported the delivery of an air shipment of medicines valued at 4 million dollars to Belarus, on behalf of the U.S. volunteer organizations Heart-to-heart and Citihope International. These humanitarian deliveries represent the best of my country - public-private partnerships which serve to provide much needed medical assistance to the people of both Ukraine and Belarus.

On this solemn anniversary, we pay tribute to the lives lost and the communities hurt in Ukraine, Belarus and Russia in the devastation following the disaster at Chornobyl. We honor those emergency workers who gave their lives to contain the fire and radiation, and welcome the efforts of governments in the OSCE region to prevent other man-made environmental disasters of this scale.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.