Monday, June 12, 2000

Volume 36, Issue 23; ISSN: 0511-4187

Remarks on signing a Ukraine-United States joint statement in Kiev, Ukraine

William J Clinton

June 5, 2000

Thank you very much. Mr. President, Mr. Prime Minister, leaders of the government, leaders and Members of the Rada, leaders of the court, distinguished citizens. I am delighted to be back in Ukraine, and delighted to be again with President Kuchma to work on our strategic partnership, because the success of Ukraine as a free and prosperous nation is very important to the United States.

Of course, succeeding in the future requires learning from the past. I am very proud and moved to be here today-this is World Environment Day-for this historic announcement by President Kuchma that the final reactor at the Chernobyl nuclear powerplant will be shut down and the entire plant closed forever on December the 15th. This is a hopeful moment. It is also a moment when we remember those who suffered as a result of the accident there.

The President and I agreed that we can grow our economies and protect the environment and public health at the same time, and so we must. I am pleased to announce that the United States will pledge $78 million for the Chernobyl Shelter Fund to contain radiation from the destroyed reactor, and another $2 million to expand efforts to improve safety at Ukraine's other nuclear powerplants.

The President and I also discussed his plan for economic reform. He and his team have an economic plan that can put Ukraine on a path towards sustainable growth and much higher living standards. President Kuchma has moved to give his people their own land, to reduce government bureaucracy, to promote entrepreneurship. He has taken recent steps to enhance Ukraine's protection of intellectual property rights and the rule of law. And these things improve the climate for investment in Ukraine and will attract more investment dollars from the United States and other places across the world.

In that spirit, I am pleased to announce a new 5-year, $25-million business development program for small- and medium-sized businesses in Ukraine to help them participate in the growing economy.

Finally, I want to take another important step today. Because of Ukraine's strong ef forts to prevent missile proliferation, I am announcing our decision to eliminate commercial space quotas and open the door to expanded U.S. cooperation with Ukraine's space program. This decision will have a posifive, long-term impact on Ukraine's economic prospects, creating more high-tech jobs and positioning Ukraine to be a leader in a cutting-edge area of 21st century commerce. It will also enhance the ability of American companies to compete in space. This represents the kind of high-level partnership our countries can look forward to as we enter

the new century together.

Thank you very much, Mr. President. It's been a good day.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:20 p.m. in the White Room at Mariinskiy Palace. In his remarks, he referred to President Leonid Kuchma and Prime Minister Viktor Yushchenko of Ukraine.