

draft #2

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
COLUMN FOR RELEASE MAY 1, 1996
TALKING IT OVER/CREATORS SYNDICATE

At first glance, Children's Hospital #4 in Minsk looks like many other hospitals I've visited around the world. But there's ^{one big} difference: ^{It's} ~~This hospital~~ treats children who ^{suffer from} ~~have a variety~~ of ~~unusual~~ illnesses that doctors say are the consequences of the Chornobyl nuclear disaster.

I visited the hospital two years ago and met some of the children whose lives were changed forever ^{when} ~~after~~ an explosion and fire at the V.I. Lenin Atomic Power Plant in Chornobyl sent a deadly radioactive cloud over Ukraine, Belarus, Russia and parts of Europe.

Singing songs and sporting the green Boston Celtics baseball caps we ^{had} brought for them, the children greeted me in high spirits, despite their ailments. I ~~wondered how~~ ^{many} of the ~~children~~ ^{one} would ~~not~~ have been in ~~that~~ ^{the} hospital if it weren't for Chornobyl.

^{skt} ~~This week marks~~ the 10th anniversary of the Chornobyl disaster, a tragedy that continues to haunt us to this day. In the vast wasteland around Chornobyl, villages remain abandoned, ^{ghost towns} ~~(the protective cover around the reactor is crumbling)~~ rivers are

contaminated, and rich farmland is still unusable. I remember being warned not to eat ^{a grape} ~~fruit~~ in Minsk because ^{crop} ~~the soil it came~~ from might be radioactive. ~~To make matters worse,~~ ^{Even} the protective ~~lower~~ ^{concrete} around the reactor is crumbling.

These are the obvious after-effects of Chornobyl. But what makes this tragedy ^{so horrible} unique is that ~~so much of the damage is still~~ ^{the full extent of the damage is still} unknown. It will take years, if not ^{generations} ~~decades~~, to ^(understand) ~~discern~~ the explosion's ^{total} ~~ultimate~~ impact on the environment, the food chain, and human genetics.

[NANDRE →

Doctors and nurses in Minsk told me that they were seeing increasing rates of respiratory illness, heart disease and birth defects, ^{They also report} ~~as well as~~ abnormally-high rates of thyroid cancer and other thyroid diseases in children ^{and} ~~diseases~~ that before the explosion, rarely appeared in people so young. Those rates are expected to climb since cancers that result from radiation exposure often do not develop for 10 to 20 years.

At the Left Bank Center for Maternal and Child Health Care in Kiev, about 60 miles from Chornobyl, ^{pregnant} ~~expectant~~ mothers ^{shared} ~~told me~~ they ~~were~~ ^{are} worried ^{about} whether their children would ~~have~~ ^{come into the world with} birth defects ~~associated with exposure to the radioactive fall-out that~~ reached as far away as Germany and Scandinavia. During ~~my visit~~ there in 1995, I also heard about ^{Infertility} and other reproductive problems. ^{In 1994, for example; I was} Belarus and Ukraine ^{are} the only two countries in Europe that experienced negative population growth.

^{also plague couples throughout the region.}

according to a 1994 U.N. study.

As with so many tragedies, some good has emerged. If there is any good news from the ten years since the Chornobyl explosion, it is that so many people around the world are helping the people of Ukraine, Belarus and Russia recover.

In Belarus, I met American doctors from Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh who have come to Belarus to help their colleagues learn new ways of treating their patients. I watched Belarusian soldiers deliver large boxes of blankets, syringes, bandages and medicines through Operation Provide Hope, a U.S. military program that sends surplus medical supplies to the former Soviet Union. We helped pass out crayons and coloring books donated by American companies. They, and many other health and relief workers like them, are the brighter half of the Chornobyl story.

To celebrate the relief efforts, in the coming weeks, As part of Chornobyl Challenge '96, a coordinated effort to commemorate the disaster and to raise money for relief programs, Vice-President Gore and I are hosting a ceremony at the White House to honor the humanitarian organizations, businesses, doctors, scientists, religious leaders, and private citizens who, often at risk to their own health, have spent the last decade aiding the victims of Chornobyl.

Private foundations such as the Children of Chornobyl have raised money, medical supplies and equipment to send to the

We're also celebrating the resilience of the children of Chornobyl.

affected areas. They are ~~raising~~^{educate} awareness about Chornobyl, helping all of us understand the disaster's global proportions. And they have flown some of the youngest victims of Chornobyl to the United States for more advanced treatment.

^{with} One of those ~~children~~^{new} is 11-year old Vova, who came to the U.S. from Ukraine in 1990 for medical treatment for leukemia.

"We should not forget the many children who need our help, who are not as lucky as I have been," he says. "Please do not forget Chornobyl."

The little Ukrainian boy reminds us that he and children like him -- the children of Chornobyl and children everywhere whose health and lives have been devastated through no fault of their own, ^{they} ~~we~~ were and always will be our common responsibility ^{as}

We are all members of the human family.

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draft #1

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Children's Hospital #4 in Minsk looks like many other hospitals ^{I've seen around the world} ~~in the former Soviet Union~~. But there's one difference: It treats thousands [ck] of children with thyroid cancer, one of the apparent consequences of the Chornobyl nuclear disaster.

I visited the hospital two years ago and met some of the children whose lives were changed forever after an explosion at the V.I. Lenin Atomic Power Plant in Chornobyl sent a deadly radioactive cloud over Ukraine, Belarus, Russia and parts of northern Europe.

This week marks the 10th anniversary of the Chornobyl disaster, a tragedy that touches us to this day. More and more people are falling ill, villages remain abandoned, rivers are contaminated, and rich farmland is still unusable. I remember being warned not to eat a grape because the soil it came from might be radioactive.

These are the obvious after-effects of Chornobyl. But what makes this tragedy unique is that so much of the damage is still unknown. It will take years, if not decades, to see the

explosion's ultimate impact on the environment, the food chain, and human genetics.

Doctors and nurses in Minsk told me that they were seeing increasing rates of respiratory illness, heart disease and birth defects, as well as abnormally-high rates of thyroid cancer and other thyroid diseases in children, diseases that before the explosion, rarely appeared in people so young.

At the xxx hospital in Kiev, about 60 miles from Chornobyl, expectant mothers said they were worried about whether their children would have birth defects or abnormalities associated with the radioactive fall-out that stretched as far as Germany and Scandinavia.

met with some American doctors who are lending their time and expertise to Ukrainian and Belarussian hospitals....They are the brighter half of the Chornobyl story. And while I left feeling more distressed that a tragedy like this could ever happen, I felt more thankful that so many people around the world were helping these children recover.

On the surface, the kids seemed in pretty good shape. They sang songs for me and delighted in putting on the green Boston Celtics caps we brought.

That's the illusion of Chornobyl, and of any disaster like it.

and also the doctors and nurses who treat them.

Sporting green Boston Celtics caps, (which had been donated by the basketball team), the children seemed happy. Though some of them had lost their hair to chemotherapy [check?], they did not seem desperately ill. Their apparent health was deceptive.

That is the tragedy of Chornobyl. Few people died instantly after nuclear reactor in that Ukrainian city exploded, sending 200 times more radiation than the atomic bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki combined over the Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia. Yet many are who lived in that area are still suffering from illnesses that many doctors trace to their exposure to radiation

from Chornobyl. Many more are still dreading the day when they, too fall ill.

Soviet officials did not notify the general public about the explosion for two days. So for two days after the explosion, citizens living nearby continued to go about their lives, eating food that was radioactive, walking to school, playing outdoors.

No one will ever able to calculate the human toll of the explosion. Few scientists can agree on how many illnesses, birth defects, and other physical and psychological tragedies can ultimately be attributed to the radiation from the explosion.

In Kiev last year, I met with many expectant mothers at a childbirth class. They told me of their anxieties about pregnancies and their children. add details here.]

Ten years after the explosion, there are miles and miles of land that are still and perhaps never will be livable. The great Dnieper River is showing signs of contamination. The 10-story concrete "sarcophagus" built to contain the remains of Reactor # 4 is already leaking.

The Ukraine and Belarus, which have become independent nations in the years since the explosion, are still coping with Chornobyl's legacy. Seventy percent of the radiation from Chornobyl fell over Belarus.

And while the radiation largely befell the people of the Ukraine, Belarus and Russia, many throughout the world and especially here in the United States have realized that the tragedy of Chornobyl befell all of us.

This week, Vice-President Gore and I hosted a reception in the East Room of the White House to honor the humanitarian organizations, doctors, scientists, spiritual leaders, and private citizens who have spent the last decade helping the victims of Chornobyl.

Private foundations such as the [Alex Kuzma's group -- Children of Chornobyl?] have raised millions of dollars and medical supplies and equipment to send to the Ukraine and Belarus. Peace organizations such as xx have been working to "clean up" Chornobyl and devising ways to make sure a tragedy like Chornobyl never happens again -- in the Ukraine, in Belarus, in America, or anywhere. [more about US aid package, VP Gore's announcement at ceremony.]

And doctors from [all over this country?] have volunteered

their time and traveled to treat patients in Belarus and the Ukraine. Still other organizations have flown some of the youngest victims of Chornobyl to Europe and the United States for more advanced treatment.

One of those children was 12-year old Vova, who has thyroid cancer. He came to U.S. from the Ukraine in 19xx and now lives in Connecticut[?] Vova spoke to us in the East Room... [more about Vova goes here]

Standing in the grandeur of the White House East Room, under the gigantic portraits of George and Martha Washington, the little Ukrainian boy reminded us all that he and children like him, the children of Chornobyl and children everywhere whose health and lives have been devastated through no fault of their own, were and always will be our common responsibility, members of the human family.

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Children's Hospital #4 in Minsk looks like many other hospitals I've visited around the world. [Doctors and nurses are doing their best to care for seriously ill children under circumstances that are far from ideal. But there's a difference: This hospital treats children who have a variety of unusual illnesses that doctors say are the consequences of the Chornobyl nuclear disaster.

I visited the hospital two years ago and met some of the children whose lives were changed forever after an explosion ^{and fire} at the V.I. Lenin Atomic Power Plant in Chornobyl sent a deadly radioactive cloud over Ukraine, Belarus, Russia and parts of ~~northern~~ Europe.

Singing songs and sporting the green Boston Celtics baseball caps we had brought for them, the children greeted me in high spirits ^{despite their ailments.} The hospital gowns and bald heads under the caps were the only obvious sign of their illnesses. I wondered how many of the children would not have been in that hospital if it weren't for Chornobyl.

This week marks the 10th anniversary of the Chornobyl

disaster, a tragedy that continues to haunt us to this day. In the vast wasteland around Chornobyl, villages remain abandoned, the protective cover around the reactor is ^(crumbling) ~~leaking~~, rivers are contaminated, and rich farmland is still unusable. I remember being warned not to eat ^{fruit} ~~a grape~~ in Minsk because the soil it came from might be radioactive.

These are the obvious after-effects of Chornobyl. But what makes this tragedy unique is that so much of the damage is still unknown. It will take years, if not decades, to ^(discern) ~~see~~ the explosion's ultimate impact on the environment, the food chain, and human genetics.

Doctors and nurses in Minsk told me that they were seeing increasing rates of respiratory illness, heart disease and birth defects, as well as abnormally-high rates of thyroid cancer and other thyroid diseases in children, diseases that before the explosion, rarely appeared in people so young. Those rates are expected to climb since cancers that result from radiation exposure often do not develop for 10 to 20 years.

At the Left Bank Center for Maternal and Child Health Care in Kiev, about 60 miles from Chornobyl, expectant mothers told me they were worried about whether their children would have birth defects associated with exposure to the radioactive fall-out that reached as far away as Germany and Scandinavia. During my visit

there in 1995, I also heard about infertility and other reproductive problems. [Belarus and ^gthe Ukraine are the only two countries in Europe that experienced negative population growth, according to a 1994 U.N. study]. *Male fertility rates highest in the world?*

If there is any good news from the ten years since the Chernobyl explosion, it is that so many people around the world are helping the people of Ukraine, Belarus and Russia recover.

In Belarus, I met American doctors from Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh who are teaching their Belarusian colleagues new ways of treating their patients. I watched Belarusian soldiers deliver large boxes of blankets, syringes, bandages and medicines through the U.S. military's Operation Provide Hope, a program that sends surplus medical supplies to the former Soviet Union. I helped pass out crayons and coloring books donated by American companies. They, and many other health and relief workers like them are the brighter half of the Chernobyl story.

As part of Chernobyl Challenge '96, a coordinated effort to commemorate the disaster and to raise money for relief programs, Vice-President Gore and I are hosting a ^{commemorative event} ~~reception~~ in the White House to honor the humanitarian organizations, businesses, doctors, scientists, spiritual leaders, and private citizens who, often at risk to their own health, have spent the last decade aiding the victims of Chernobyl.

Private foundations such as the Children of Chornobyl have raised money, medical supplies and equipment to send to the affected areas. They are raising awareness about Chornobyl, helping all of us understand the disaster's global proportions. And they have flown some of the youngest victims of Chornobyl to the United States for more advanced treatment.

One of those children is 11-year old Vova, who came to the U.S. from ~~the~~² Ukraine in 1990 for medical treatment for ~~xx~~. *leukemia*.

"We should not forget the many children who need our help, who are not as lucky as I have been," he says. "Please do not forget Chornobyl."

The little Ukrainian boy reminds us that he and children like him -- the children of Chornobyl and children everywhere whose health and lives have been devastated through no fault of their own -- were and always will be our common responsibility.

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I visited the hospital two years ago and met some of the children whose lives were changed forever after an explosion at the V.I. Lenin Atomic Power Plant in Chornobyl sent a deadly radioactive cloud over Ukraine, Belarus, Russia and parts of northern Europe.

Singing songs and sporting the green Boston Celtics baseball caps we had brought for them, the children greeted me in high spirits. The bald heads under the ~~baseball~~ caps were perhaps the only obvious sign of serious illness. I wondered how many of ~~these~~ children would not have been in that hospital if it weren't for Chornobyl.

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disaster, a tragedy that continues to ^{haunt} ~~touch~~ us to this day. In the vast wasteland around Chornobyl, villages remain abandoned, the ^{protective cover} reactor is leaking, rivers are contaminated, and rich farmland is still unusable. I remember being warned not to eat a grape in Minsk because the soil it came from might be radioactive.

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there in 1995, I also heard about infertility and other reproductive problems. [Belarus and the Ukraine are the only two countries in Europe that experienced negative population growth, according to a 1994 U.N. study].

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As part of Chernobyl Challenge '96, a coordinated effort to commemorate the disaster and to raise money for relief programs, Vice-President Gore and I are hosting a reception in the White House to honor the humanitarian organizations, businesses, doctors, scientists, spiritual leaders, and private citizens who, often at risk to their own health, have spent the last decade aiding the victims of Chernobyl.

Perhaps no one will ever be able to calculate the human toll of the explosion.

If there any good news from the 10 years

~~While I left both these countries feeling more distressed that a tragedy like this could ever happen, I also felt grateful~~ that so many people around the world are helping the people of Ukraine, Belarus and Russia recover.

~~The tragedy of Chernobyl befell all of us.~~

In Belarus, I met American doctors from Pittsburgh who are teaching their Belarussian colleagues new ways of treating their patients. I watched soldiers deliver large boxes of blankets, syringes, bandages and medicines through the U.S. military's Operation Provide Hope, a program that sends surplus medical supplies to the former Soviet Union. *we brought drugs* They, and many other health and relief workers like them are the brighter half of the Chernobyl story.

As part of Chernobyl Challenge '96

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Children's Hospital #4 in Minsk looks like many other hospitals ^{I've visited around the world.} ~~in the former Soviet Union.~~ Doctors and nurses ^{are} ~~try to~~ do their best ^{under circumstances that are often} ~~with facilities that doctors here would call~~ primitive. But there's ^{one} ~~the~~ difference: It treats thousands [ck] of children with thyroid cancer, one of the apparent consequences of the Chornobyl nuclear disaster.

I visited the hospital two years ago and met some of the children whose lives were changed forever after an explosion at the V.I. Lenin Atomic Power Plant in Chornobyl sent a deadly radioactive cloud over Ukraine, Belarus, Russia and parts of northern Europe.

Singing songs and sporting ^{green} the Boston Celtics baseball caps ^{we had brought for them} ~~that had been given to them by the team,~~ the children greeted me in high spirits. The bald heads under the baseball caps were perhaps the only obvious sign ^{cancer treatments they were undergoing} ~~that some of them were seriously~~ ill. I wondered how many of those children would not have been in that hospital if it weren't for Chornobyl.

This week marks the 10th anniversary of the Chornobyl disaster, a tragedy that touches us to this day. ^{continues to} ~~More and more~~ ^{kill}

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people are falling ill, villages remain abandoned, rivers are contaminated, the ~~ten-story concrete "sarcophagus" built to~~ ^{contain the remains of the reactor is} leaking, and rich farmland is still unusable. In Minsk, I remember being warned not to eat a grape because the soil it came from might be radioactive.

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At the xxx hospital in Kiev, about 60 miles from Chornobyl, expectant mothers ^{believe} ~~said~~ they were worried about whether their children would have birth defects or abnormalities associated with the radioactive fall-out that stretched as far as Germany and Scandinavia. ~~And even those couples said they felt luckier than most since others were experiencing infertility problems.~~

^{also} heard about . . .

Private foundations such as the Children of Chornobyl have raised money, medical supplies and equipment to send to the affected areas. They are raising awareness about Chornobyl, helping all of us understand the disaster's global proportions. And they have flown some of the youngest victims of Chornobyl to the United States for more advanced treatment.

One of those children is 11-year old Vova, who was just a
hand c
baby when the radiation from Chornobyl passed over his village in
the Ukraine. In 1990, he came to the U.S. for medical treatment for xx.

~~Vova will speak at the White House reception this week.~~ "We should not forget the many children who need our help, who are not as lucky as I have been," he says. "Let us make sure that an accident like Chornobyl never happens again and let us do all we can to make this world a safer, healthier place."

The little Ukrainian boy reminds us that he and children like him, the children of Chornobyl and children everywhere whose health and lives have been devastated through no fault of their own, were and always will be our common responsibility. After
all, we are members of the human family.

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