

CHERNOBYL

0273 - 830292

FF057

B-WIRE

09-MAY-1990 07:35:56

USSR -- IAEA TO MOUNT MAJOR SURVEY OF HEALTH EFFECTS OF CHERNOBYL

LONDON, MAY 9 (NCA/STUART PARROTT) -- THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA) IS TO SEND A TEAM OF INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS TO THE SOVIET UNION TO ASSESS THE HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE 1986 CHERNOBYL NUCLEAR DISASTER.

THE INDEPENDENT EXPERTS WILL MONITOR PEOPLE IN SELECTED VILLAGES IN THE WORST CONTAMINATED AREAS TO ASSESS THE EXTERNAL DOSES OF RADIATION THEY ARE CURRENTLY RECEIVING.

A TEAM OF MEDICAL SPECIALISTS WILL EVALUATE CLINICAL HEALTH EFFECTS ATTRIBUTED TO RADIATION EXPOSURE, AND ASSESS THE GENERAL HEALTH OF PEOPLE IN THE AFFECTED AREAS.

THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS WILL ALSO ASSESS MEASURES TAKEN BY SOVIET AUTHORITIES TO PROTECT THE POPULATION FROM EXPOSURE.

THE VIENNA-BASED IAEA WILL PUBLISH THE SURVEY FINDINGS LATER THIS YEAR AND ARRANGE FOR OPEN MEETINGS IN THE SOVIET UNION AT WHICH THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY CAN BE DISCUSSED.

AN IAEA STATEMENT DESCRIBES THE SURVEY AS A "MAJOR PROJECT". IT SAYS ABOUT 100 INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS WILL BE INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT WHICH BEGINS LATER THIS MONTH.

OUR CORRESPONDENT SAYS THE IAEA PROJECT WILL LIKELY RESULT IN THE MOST OBJECTIVE AND ACCURATE ASSESSMENT YET UNDERTAKEN OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF CHERNOBYL. IT WILL ALSO CAST LIGHT ON THE QUALITY OF OFFICIAL SOVIET INFORMATION SINCE THE ACCIDENT FOUR YEARS AGO.

THE IAEA STATEMENT -- DISTRIBUTED MONDAY -- SAYS THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL ORGANISATION (FAO), THE U.N. SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE ON THE EFFECTS OF ATOMIC RADIATION (UNSCEAR), AND THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION (WHO) WILL TAKE PART IN THE SURVEY.

THE PROJECT FOLLOWS A REQUEST BY THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT FOR AN INTERNATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF MEASURES AIMED AT ENABLING PEOPLE TO LIVE SAFELY IN AREAS AFFECTED BY RADIOACTIVE CONTAMINATION, AND ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MEASURES AIMED AT SAFEGUARDING HEALTH.

SOVIET AND IAEA OFFICIALS MET IN MOSCOW IN FEBRUARY TO PLAN THE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM.

INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS SUBSEQUENTLY VISITED CONTAMINATED VILLAGES IN THE BYELORUSSIAN, UKRAINIAN AND RUSSIAN REPUBLICS TO PREPARE FOR THE SURVEY. THEY INCLUDED EXPERTS FROM THE UNITED STATES, BRITAIN, AUSTRIA AND JAPAN.

THE EXPERTS REVIEWED INFORMATION PROVIDED BY SCIENTIFIC ORGANISATIONS, HOSPITALS, CLINICS AND FARMING CENTRES.

THEIR FINDINGS WERE PRESENTED TO AN INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE WHICH MET IN KIEV AND MINSK IN APRIL. THIS COMMITTEE ALSO INCLUDED EXPERTS FROM CANADA, FRANCE AND FINLAND.

THE COMMITTEE INCLUDES SPECIALISTS WITH EXPERTISE IN MEDICAL, RADIOPATHOLOGY, PSYCHOLOGY, EPIDEMIOLOGY, RADIOECOLOGY, NUTRITION, DOSIMETRY AND RADIATION PROTECTION AREAS.

ITS MEMBERS INCLUDES THE VICE PRESIDENTS OF THE UKRAINIAN AND BYELORUSSIAN REPUBLICS' ACADEMIES OF SCIENCES.

THE IAEA STATEMENT SAID THE PROJECT WILL INCLUDE "THE CORROBORATION OF DATA TO BE PROVIDED BY THE USSR AS WE S AN EVALUATION OF THE PROTECTIVE MEASURES THAT WERE TAKEN."

THE PROJECT IS SCHEDULED TO BE COMPLETED BY THE END OF THIS YEAR. THE INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE WILL PRODUCE A REPORT TO BE PUBLISHED BY THE IAEA. THIS WILL FORM THE BASIS FOR SUBSEQUENT FOLLOW-UP STUDIES.

THE STATEMENT SAYS MEETINGS WILL LIKELY BE STAGED IN KIEV AND MINSK IN WHICH THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDIES WILL BE OPEN TO "BROAD DISCUSSION." (PTO)



FFD58

B-WIRE

09-MAY-1990 07:37:55

USSR -- (1) -- IAEA TO MOUNT MAJOR SURVEY OF ....

TEAMS OF SPECIALISTS WILL HAVE FIVE MAJOR TASKS:

-- TO COLLECT ALL AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON THE PRESENT EXTENT OF CONTAMINATION IN AFFECTED AREAS, AND TO PREQ F N"ACCURATE, COHERENT AND CONSISTENT ACCOUNT" OF RELEVANT EVENTS SURROUNDING THE APRIL, 1986, CHERNOBYL ACCIDENT.

-- TO REVIEW OFFICIALLY RECORDED DATA ON ENVIRONMENTAL CONTAMINATION FROM CAESIUM, STRONTIUM AND PLUTONIUM FALL-OUT. ONE OF THE FIRST TASKS WILL BE TO VERIFY RADIATION FALL-OUT MAPS OFFICIALLY PROVIDED BY THE SOVIET UNION AND TO MAKE "SPOT CHECKS" ON ENVIRONMENTAL RADIOACTIVITY IN POPULATED AREAS.

-- TO EVALUATE DOSE ASSESSMENT CALCULATIONS MADE BY THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES AND ALSO ASSESS METHODS USED TO COMPUTE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE LEVELS OF RADIATION EXPOSURE.

AS PART OF THIS TASK, PEOPLE IN SELECTED VILLAGES WILL BE MONITORED TO CHECK ON THE EXTERNAL RADIATION DOSE THEY ARE RECEIVING. INDIVIDUAL RADIATION DETECTORS WILL BE DISTRIBUTED TO LOCAL PEOPLE, AND BODY COUNTERS WILL BE BROUGHT TO VILLAGES TO ASSESS LEVELS OF CAESIUM-137 ABSORBED BY LOCAL PEOPLE.

-- TO EXAMINE THE CLINICAL HEALTH EFFECTS ATTRIBUTED TO RADIATION EXPOSURE AS WELL AS THE GENERAL HEALTH OF THE POPULATION IN THE AFFECTED AREAS. THE MEDICAL TEAMS WILL VISIT THE VILLAGES IN THE CONTAMINATED AREAS. THEY WILL CHECK ON WHETHER SOME HEALTH PROBLEMS ATTRIBUTED TO CHERNOBYL MAY IN FACT BE CAUSED BY NUTRITIONAL OR DIETARY PROBLEMS OR POSSIBLE POISONING BY HEAVY METALS, PARTICULARLY LEAD.

-- TO EVALUATE THE EFFICIENCY OF PROTECTIVE MEASURES TAKEN BY SOVIET AUTHORITIES AFTER THE CHERNOBYL ACCIDENT. TW