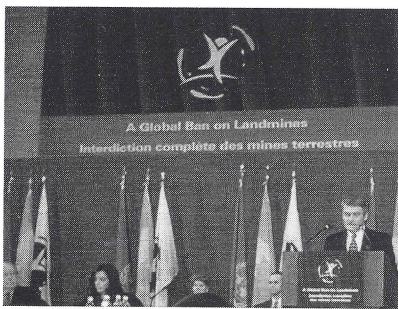


Ukraine Delays Signing Ottawa Landmine Treaty



Dec. 2, 1997... Ukraine delayed signing the Ottawa Landmine Convention because it does not have the resources necessary to destroy all its landmines within the time frame called for in the treaty. However, it hopes to sign it in the future, stated Ukraine's Foreign Ministry in a press statement released by the Embassy of Ukraine in Canada.

The campaign to ban landmines was a major international process spearheaded by Canada. Some 125 nations agreed to sign the convention, notable exceptions being the United States, Russia and China.

Ukraine's Foreign Minister and President of the 52nd Session of the UN General Assembly Hennadiy Udovenko expressed full support for Canada's international peace initiatives: "Ukraine has deep respect for Canada's role in this process and welcomes the achievements obtained within a very short time frame. In this regard, we pay special tribute to the personal contribution of the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, the Canadian Foreign Minister."

In addressing the Ottawa conference, Ukraine's Ambassador Volodymyr Furkalo said that Ukraine has already taken many steps in the arms control process and removal of weapons on its territory, in keeping with the main guidelines of its foreign policy.

"From the outset of restoration of its independence, Ukraine has become party to all major instruments in the field of arms control and disarmament. It voluntarily gave up the world's third largest nuclear arsenal, which is unprecedented in the history of international relations. At the 52nd session of the UN General Assembly Ukraine voted in favour of the draft resolution proposed by Canada.

"As a part of its contribution to international efforts in this field Ukraine has been strictly abiding by the 1995 national moratorium on their export and is determined to prolong this moratorium. Neither producing nor exporting these deadly weapons, Ukraine does not reject the possibility of acceding to the Convention in the foreseeable future. In addition, Ukraine adheres to and is planning to ratify the Protocol II of the CCW Convention amended in May 1996.

"Ukraine fully supports the noble spirit of the Convention. Our country hopes that in the foreseeable future it will also be in the position to sign the document and significantly contribute into this highly conscious international effort to help reduce and totally eradicate these inhuman weapons, enhance sustainable peace, security and stability around the globe," concluded Amb. Furkalo.

Ukraine-NATO Cooperation Intensifies

Brussels, Dec. 1997... The NATO-Ukraine Commission held a landmark meeting at the ministerial level, as part of a session of the NATO Council comprised of the allied countries' foreign ministers. Progress was reviewed on the implementation of the NATO-Ukraine Charter of Distinctive Partnership (signed last July), and a substantial NATO-Ukraine Work Plan for 1998 was approved.

The plan's priorities include: improving interoperability between Ukrainian and NATO forces; supporting Ukraine's military reform efforts through the creation of a Joint Working Group on Military Reform; and expanding the activities of the NATO

Information Centre in Kyiv.

The sessions also resolved to develop an "enhanced" Individual Program for Ukraine within the framework of NATO's Partnership for Peace program. Defining Ukraine as a "key factor for security and stability in Europe," NATO foreign ministers declared that "NATO and Ukraine together have a unique opportunity to shape the future of Euro-Atlantic security."

Ukrainian foreign minister Hennadiy Udovenko told the sessions that "integration into European and EuroAtlantic political, economic, and security structures represents Ukraine's conscious and strategic choice, which dominates and determines its foreign policy and development as an independent European state."

During the Commission meetings, NATO and Ukraine's Ministry of Emergencies and Affairs of Population Protection from the Consequences of the Chornobyl Catastrophe signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Civil Emergency Planning and Disaster Preparedness.

Canada currently chairs NATO's Civil Protection Committee (CPC), which is a subcommittee of the Senior Civil Emergency Planning Committee. In Sept. 1997, Ukraine's Deputy Minister of Emergency Planning, LGen. V. Hrechaninov, in his second visit to Canada and meetings with his Canadian counterpart, Dr. Eric Shipley, Executive Director of Emergency Preparedness Canada, signed a Canada-Ukraine MOU to detail and expand cooperation in the field of civil emergency preparedness.

The NATO-Ukraine MOU will enhance practical cooperation in the framework of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) to improve Ukraine's disaster preparedness mechanisms and to develop, in the long-term, interoperability of national civil emergency planning structures under civil and democratic control.

Canadian Observers at 1998 Spring Elections

Jan. 1998... Canada will send ten observers to Ukraine's elections to Parliament on March 29, 1998, which feature a crowded field of 30 political parties and coalitions.

Voting fragmentation is inevitable among the 20 registered parties considered democratically inclined, from the right-leaning National Front bloc to the Social Democrats on the other side. The parties failed to form substantial blocs, leaving the center split against a tightly organized group of Communists and Socialists. Analysts believe few centrist parties will be able to garner the 4 percent required in the new mixed system electoral law to seat candidates in the next Verkhovna Rada.

UN Ranks Ukraine 95th in Human Development

Jan. 1997... A United Nations report on Ukraine places Ukraine 95th amongst 175 countries under its Human Development Index, consisting of factors such as mortality rates, life expectancy, education and economic indicators.

The Ukrainian HDI is likely to decrease even further because of falling life expectancy, worsening education and public health standards, as well as the decline in GDP.