



HSC Chair Report

Topic 2: Addressing the Chernobyl Nuclear
Meltdown in 1986



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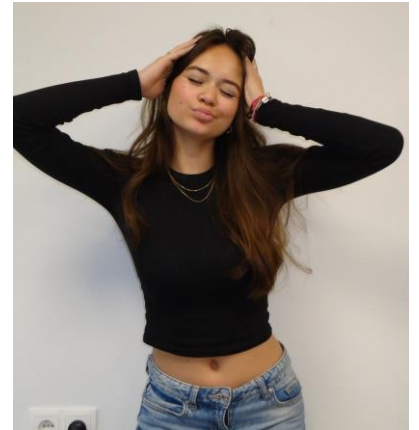
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Personal Statements

Chair – Annika Maassen van den Brink

Dear delegates, my name is Annika Maassen van den Brink. Together with Sophia we will be chairing HSC of this year's MUNISS. I am 16 years old and I live in Arnhem. I attend the Lorentz Lyceum, I am in my 5th year of two and my "party trick" is a backflip. And I am always down to make a TikTok. This will be the second time I participate in MUNISS, a conference I have great memories from. I hope you all leave this conference with amazing memories as well. MUN's are a big part of my life, I have participated in 14 conferences and MUNISS will be my 15th. This will be my fourth (official) time chairing and I am hugely excited to meet you all at MUNISS 2025 .



Deputy Chair – Sophia Wulff

Honorable Delegates! My name is Sophia Wulff, and I will be serving as your deputy chair for Historical Security Council alongside Annika. I go to the International School of Laren in the Netherlands and I'm currently in DPI. I've always enjoyed being in MUN conferences and so far, I have currently participated in 4 conferences. It's my first time participating in MUNISS and also my first time being a chair, so I hope that we can have a wonderful time debating and make long-lasting friendships along the way. Outside of MUNS, I'm a sucker for listening to music (calling all PARTYNEXTDOOR and The Weeknd fans) as well as dancing, so if anyone is interested in filming a dance challenge, your girl is right here. I look forward to meeting all of you in April, and if you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out! sophiawulfff@gmail.com



Introduction

The Chernobyl nuclear meltdown of 1986 stands as one of the most catastrophic nuclear disasters in history, an event that shocked the entire world. It resulted in far-reaching consequences for human health, the environment, and nuclear safety regulations worldwide.

It all happened on the night of April 26, 1986. Reactor 4 at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in Pripyat, Soviet Ukraine, exploded during a late-night safety test, releasing massive amounts of radioactive material into the atmosphere, leading to 30 immediate deaths and long-term health effects such as radiation sickness and increased cancer rates.

The disaster was caused by a combination of faulty reactor design and operator errors. The explosion contaminated many areas, forcing thousands to evacuate and leaving the region uninhabitable for decades. According to the World Health Organization, over 600,000 people were registered as having received significant levels of radiation exposure, with children in Belarus, Ukraine, and Russia experiencing thyroid cancer rates that increased by up to 100 times following the disaster. This incident not only exposed the dangers of nuclear power mismanagement but also initiated significant changes in nuclear safety protocols, shaping the global approach to atomic energy.



Glossary

- **EEC:** European Economic Community
- **Genetic Mutations:** Permanent changes in an organism's DNA that can affect how genes function. These changes can occur naturally or be caused by external factors like radiation and can sometimes lead to diseases, birth defects, or variations in traits.
- **IAEA:** International Atomic Energy Agency
- **Liquidators:** The workers and emergency responders who were sent to clean up the Chernobyl disaster site after the explosion in 1986. They included firefighters, soldiers, engineers, and scientists, often at great personal risk.
- **Radiation:** Energy released in the form of waves or particles. High levels of radiation, especially from nuclear accidents, can be harmful to living organisms.
- **WHO:** World Health Organisation



Major Parties Involved

- **Soviet Union** - Chernobyl was in the Soviet Union (present day Ukraine), meaning it was the Soviet Union that was primarily responsible for addressing the nuclear meltdown.
- **WHO** - The organisation is involved in the Chernobyl issue primarily because of the disaster's serious and lasting public health effects. They offer medical support and guidelines, and they will do research.
- **IAEA** - During the Chernobyl disaster, the IAEA served as an information coordinator and technical advisor, though initially hampered by limited Soviet transparency. The agency verified radiation data, coordinated international monitoring, and organized the August 1986 Vienna conference where Soviet officials presented their analysis.
- **EEC** - The European Economic Community responded to Chernobyl by implementing radiation monitoring across member states and restricting imports of potentially contaminated agricultural products. The EEC focused on coordinating a unified European response rather than direct intervention at the disaster site.



Issue Explanation

The Chernobyl nuclear disaster, which occurred in April 1986, is already proving to have devastating consequences across multiple dimensions, including humanitarian and social aspects. The most immediate result is the health impact on the civilians exposed to high radiation levels. Reports of radiation sickness among workers and first responders, known as "liquidators," are increasing. Many are suffering from severe symptoms. The long-term health effects remain uncertain, but there is growing fear of widespread illness. This particularly takes place in the affected areas of Ukraine and Belarus, where medical resources are limited.

Thousands of families have been forced to evacuate, leaving their homes behind in what is now an exclusion zone. Many are uncertain about their future, while those still living near Chernobyl face potential long-term health risks. Panic and misinformation are spreading, and survivors are already experiencing social stigma due to fears of radiation exposure.

The environmental consequences are also severe. Radiation has spread beyond Chernobyl. With reports of contamination in the Soviet Union, and even Western Europe. Efforts to the disaster are continuous. But there keep being questions about the effectiveness of the Soviet responses and the long-term stability of the damaged reactor. There are concerns that without proper maintenance, more radiation leaks could follow.

The Soviet Union's handling of the crisis is getting international attention, mostly negative attention. It has been shown that there were initial efforts to downplay the severity of the disaster, and this has sparked criticism, and many countries are calling for more transparency. The incident has raised global concerns about nuclear safety. Governments around the world question whether their own nuclear plants are properly protected against similar failures or risks

As the situation continues to unfold, the full impact of Chernobyl remains unknown. However, one thing is clear, this disaster is already reshaping the thoughts and opinions about nuclear energy, and international cooperation in times of crisis.



History of the Chernobyl Disaster

On April 26, 1986, a catastrophic explosion at Reactor 4 of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in Pripyat, Soviet Ukraine, exploded. It sent massive amounts of radiation into the atmosphere. The explosion happened during a late night safety test, which was due to a faulty reactor design and critical operator errors, resulting in one of the most severe nuclear disasters that has ever occurred. The Soviet government firstly downplayed the event. They were delaying evacuations and withholding key information from both its citizens and the international community.

For hours after the explosion, radiation levels spiked dangerously, but life in Pripyat continued as usual. It wasn't until April 27, more than 24 hours later, that the Soviet authorities ordered a full evacuation of the city. Nearly 50,000 residents were forced to leave their homes. They were told they would be gone only temporarily and they would be able to return. As the radioactive cloud spread beyond Soviet borders, countries such as Sweden, Finland, and Poland detected unusually high radiation levels. This resulted in putting pressure on the Soviet Union to acknowledge the situation. On April 28, after Sweden demanded an explanation, the Soviet Union finally admitted that an accident had occurred, even though they continued to downplay the scale of the disaster.

As the crisis escalated, the Soviet Union sent thousands of emergency workers to contain the radiation and decontaminate affected areas. Many of these workers, including soldiers, firefighters, and plant employees, were exposed to dangerously high radiation levels without proper protective gear. Some of them later suffered severe radiation sickness or died as a result of exposure.

To prevent further radioactive leaks, Soviet engineers rushed to construct a temporary concrete cover over Reactor 4. However, there were still doubts about its stability, and concerns remained growing. Meanwhile, international scrutiny increased. Western governments criticized the Soviet Union's secrecy, and they kept demanding more transparency. Even the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) pushed for an official Soviet explanation.



In the months following the explosion, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev finally addressed the world. In his speech he defended the government's handling of the crisis, while acknowledging that safety failures had in fact occurred. However, the disaster raised global concerns about nuclear energy safety. Starting discussions on stricter international regulations. Some countries reevaluated their own nuclear programs, while others demanded for better oversight of the Soviet reactors.

As the world watches, the full scale of the disaster is still unfolding. The Soviet government insists that the situation is under control. But there are fears that remain about long term health risks and even environmental damage. This crisis has already shaken public trust in Soviet leadership and could have lasting consequences for nuclear power worldwide. The international community now has to decide how to respond to the growing nuclear safety concerns raised by this disaster.



Timeline of Key Events

- 1970 – Construction of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant begins in Soviet Ukraine as part of the USSR's push for nuclear energy. The nearby city of Pripyat is built to house plant workers and their families.
- 1977 – Reactor 1 becomes operational, followed by three more reactors over the next few years.
- April 25-26, 1986 – A late-night safety test in Reactor 4 goes wrong due to design flaws and operator mistakes, causing a massive explosion that releases radiation into the air.
- April 26, 1986 – Explosion at Reactor No. 4 A reactor at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in the Ukrainian SSR explodes during a late-night safety test.
- April 27, 1986 – Evacuation of Pripyat The Soviet Union begins evacuating the city of Pripyat, home to nearly 50,000 people, more than 24 hours after the explosion. Official Soviet reports describe the situation as "under control."
- April-May 1986 – The USSR mobilizes liquidators, including firefighters, soldiers, and engineers, to contain the disaster. Many suffer severe radiation exposure. A concrete sarcophagus is built over Reactor 4 as a temporary containment structure.
- May 1986 – Radiation spreads across Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, and parts of Europe, causing increased cancer risks.
- April 27, 1986 – Evacuation of Pripyat
- April 28, 1986 – Sweden Detects Radiation
- April 29-30, 1986 – Growing International Concerns The United States and Western Europe express concern but receive little clarification from Soviet authorities.
- May 4, 1986 – Soviet TV Reports Fire Extinguished. The Soviet Union claims the Chernobyl fire has been fully extinguished and that radiation levels are decreasing.



- May 6, 1986 – Evacuation Expands. The exclusion zone is expanded to a 30-kilometer radius, and more towns are evacuated.
- May 14, 1986 – Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev makes his first televised speech on the disaster. He confirms the severity of the accident but insists that Western reports are exaggerated. He also confirms that “everything is under control”.
- Late May – June 1986 – International inspection Increases. France, UK, and the US monitor radiation levels and criticize Soviet secrecy. The IAEA demands more transparency, but the Soviet Union remains reluctant to share full details.
- August 1986 – Official Soviet Report Released. The Soviet Union presents its findings at an IAEA conference in Vienna, blaming the accident on operator error rather than reactor design flaws.



Potential Solutions for the issue:

As the Soviet Union struggles to comprehend the still unfolding crisis, several solutions have been proposed to the immediate and long- and short term effects of the Chernobyl disaster. Soviet officials, scientists, and engineers are working to develop possible solutions to prevent further radioactive contamination.

- Establishing an Exclusion Zone: To minimize exposure to radiation, Soviet authorities have ordered a 30-kilometer evacuation zone around the explosion.
- Covering Reactor 4: Engineers have proposed building a massive concrete structure to encase the damaged reactor, with as a goal to trap remaining radioactive materials inside.
- Medical Treatment for Affected Populations: Hospitals in Kyiv, Moscow, and Minsk are beginning to treat radiation poisoning cases, but there is no clear plan for long-term healthcare for those exposed yet.
- Decontamination Strategies: This includes washing down buildings, paving over contaminated land, and removing topsoil from highly affected radiation areas. Scientists worry that these measures may be temporary solutions.
- Review of Soviet Nuclear Safety Regulations: The Chernobyl disaster has exposed major flaws in Soviet reactor designs and operational protocols. Some officials demand a review of safety procedures in all Soviet nuclear plants to prevent future incidents.
- There is a discussion about creating a new Soviet agency dedicated to nuclear safety, which would implement stricter regulations on power plant operations.
- Some Soviet officials have proposed limited collaboration with international organizations, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), to improve safety protocols while maintaining control over Soviet nuclear programs.

As radiation continues to spread and concerns mount, the Soviet Union remains under pressure to act quickly. The world is watching as Soviet



officials struggle to control damage control, public safety, and political stability. The Chernobyl disaster has already shaken public trust in nuclear power, and decisions made in the coming months will determine the future of the global approach to nuclear safety.



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