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U.S.-RUSSIA AGREEMENTS REAFFIRM NRC'S
NUCLEAR SAFETY ASSISTANCE ROLE

Under two recent agreements signed by the United States and Russia, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's program to assist in the enhancement of civilian nuclear safety regulation in Russia was reaffirmed.

The agreements were signed on December 16, 1993, in Moscow. Vice President Albert Gore and Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin signed a set of Joint Principles of Nuclear Reactor Safety. Secretary Hazel O'Leary, of the Department of Energy, and Viktor Mikhailov, Minister of Atomic Energy for Russia, signed a Nuclear Safety Assistance Agreement.

The Nuclear Safety Assistance Agreement codifies U.S.-Russian cooperation in nuclear reactor safety activities. Under the assistance agreement, NRC will continue to help the Russian regulatory authority develop the capabilities it needs to make Russia's nuclear power plants safer. The agreement reaffirms the NRC's role in training its Russian counterpart in regulatory methods and procedures, inspection techniques and analysis, regulatory laws and the use of radioactivity monitoring equipment. The agreement also provides for continuation of assistance in improving regulatory effectiveness by developing appropriate regulatory standards, requirements and procedures. DOE's nuclear reactor safety programs are also covered under the assistance agreement.

The assistance agreement contains provisions for third party liability in the case of an incident or accident at the nuclear plants being provided help. Those provisions clear the way for U.S. industry participation in the nuclear reactor assistance program activities in Russia.

The Joint Principles of Nuclear Reactor Safety commit the NRC and the Russian Federation's regulatory agency to continue bilateral cooperation in enhancing the safety of civilian nuclear reactor operations in both countries. The principles include provisions that permit the two countries to review the safety of nuclear reactors operating in their respective countries, especially those built to earlier standards, and to conduct joint research in the field of radiological contamination.

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