

CHEMICAL WEAPONS WORKING GROUP

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U.S. AMBASSADOR VISITS KENTUCKY TO SPEAK ON INTERNATIONAL CHEMICAL WEAPONS TREATY

His Excellency Dr. Robert P. Mikulak, U.S. Ambassador to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in The Hague Spoke At Richmond Dinner

There was more going on in Richmond Tuesday night than the statewide elections. Dozens of people from Central Kentucky were present at the Arlington Club in Richmond to dine with and hear from the U.S. Ambassador representing the nation in a very important mission – global elimination of Chemical Weapons.

Ambassador Robert P. Mikulak, who earlier in the day toured the construction site of the disposal facility, explained how the Kentucky effort to destroy its stockpile of warfare agents plays an important role in the international Treaty (the Chemical Weapons Convention).

“Having toured the site and met with elected officials and citizens groups I can return to The Hague with the utmost confidence regarding the U.S. effort to destroy all the nation’s chemical weapons,” said Mikulak.

“My job is to ensure that the national security of America is protected while working with the 188 other countries that are signatories to the Treaty,” he added.

The Chemical Weapons Working Group (CWWG) who co-hosted the dinner, along with Madison County Judge Executive Kent Clark and former KY State Representative Harry Moberly arranged the Ambassador’s visit.

Judge Clark said, “It was an honor to have the Ambassador visit us and we appreciate his first-hand interest in our project here in Kentucky. We have clearly shown how unified we are on the technology being used and the support the project receives from the community and the region.”

Mikulak spoke about the situation in Libya telling guests that only part of their chemical weapons were destroyed under OPCW auspices before the revolt overthrew the Gaddafi regime. Since then OPCW inspectors have only recently been able to return and two additional, previously unknown caches of chemical weapons have been discovered. “This is why the verification element of the Treaty is so important,” he said. “The prevention of terrorists getting these weapons in their hands is a critical part of our mission.”

CWWG Director, Craig Williams was delighted with all aspects of the evening. “The Arlington Club provided a perfect venue to host the Ambassador,” he said. “The atmosphere was elegant, the service and food outstanding and the hospitality tremendous.”

The Ambassador noted that in 2013 a number of dignitaries from the OPCW will be visiting Central Kentucky and now, after his own visit, he is upbeat about what they would come away with. “I think it’s clear to anyone that the disposal project here is well on its way towards achieving its objective of safely disposing of its stocks of weapons.”

Williams added, “Having worked closely now for years with the government and contractors responsible for the project I can say that my confidence is very high that safety is a top priority. In addition, the transparency and cooperation exhibited in coordination with the Citizen’s Advisory Board is a recipe for success.”