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CSCE Digest

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The European Retreat from Religious Liberty

by Karen S. Lord

Religious intolerance is on the rise in OSCE participating States. Recent trends are chilling.

In 1997 and 1998, OSCE participating States Russia, Macedonia, Uzbekistan and Austria passed laws restricting religious liberty. Over the past three years the parliaments of Belgium, France, and Germany each established commissions to study "dangerous sects and cults." Government reports issued by Belgium and France which list groups such as Jehovah's Witnesses, Baha'i, Hindus, and charismatic Protestant and Catholic groups, implicitly warn the public to avoid such "dangerous groups." Suspect activities include "recruitment" through evangelistic outreach and distribution of tracts, activities clearly

Retreat, *continued on page 58*

Photo: Chadwick R. Gore
(l to r) House International Relations Committee Chairman Rep. Benjamin A. Gilman (R-NY), Commission Co-Chairman Rep. Christopher H. Smith (R-NJ) and Commission Chairman Sen. Alfonse D'Amato (R-NY) examine the Kosovo conflict.

Commission Focus on Kosovo Continues

by Bob Hand

On June 25, the Commission held a hearing on "Kosovo—The Humanitarian Perspective." This second Commission hearing on Kosovo this year was organized to highlight the difficult circumstances being faced by a growing number of displaced persons and refugees from Kosovo.

Chairman Sen. Alfonse D'Amato (R-NY) opened the hearing with a sharp criticism of Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic, stating that "the United States and the world community must stop treating him as the 'indispensable man' without whom peace in the Balkans is not possible." Co-Chairman Rep. Christopher H. Smith (R-NJ) warned that "widespread violence and a massive displacement of the population" is becoming increasingly likely in Kosovo, while House International Relations Committee Chairman Rep. Benjamin Gilman (R-NY) highlighted the fact that it is the "children and the young who suffer most" from these transgressions. Ranking Minority Commissioner Rep. Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) underscored that "the most humanitarian thing we can do for these people, and for those yet to be

Kosovo, *continued on page 56*

The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, by law, monitors and encourages progress in implementing the provisions of the Helsinki Accords. The Commission, created in 1976, is made up of nine Senators, nine Representatives, and one official each from the Departments of State, Defense, and Commerce. For more information, please call (202) 225-1901.

Kosovo, *from page 55*

Photo: Chadwick R. Gore

(l. to r.) Marguerite Rivera Houze and Roy Williams testify on assistance to Kosovo

victimized, is to demonstrate the resolve that Kosovo's future will not be determined through the further use of indiscriminate force against innocent civilians."

The first panel consisted of Marguerite Rivera Houze, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, U.S. Department of State, and Roy Williams, Director, Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), U.S. Agency for International Development. Secretary Houze's testimony focused on her visit to Tirana and northern Albania in early June where she learned of instances in which poor Albanian families are hosting as many as 40 people in one home. Ms. Houze also testified that in addition to the many United Nations and international humanitarian organizations providing aid to the region, the United States has contributed just $25,000 to the relief effort in Albania. She made clear that more support is needed and U.S. involvement will remain vital.

Director Williams stated that the OFDA faces two major problems in providing aid to alleviate the Kosovar refugee problem: "limited access to conflict areas and accurate numbers of the at-risk population." He also testified that OFDA provided $1 million in emergency humanitarian assistance for displaced persons, $5.7 million allocated for FY 98 grants for the poor in Kosovo, and $25,000 for refugee needs in Albania. Mr. Williams further noted that additional funds for rebuilding civil society in Kosovo have been allocated, and that NGOs are working closely together on that problem.

A second panel consisted of Holly Burkhalter, Advocacy Director of Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), who testified on behalf of two colleagues who visited Albania in mid-June; Larry Thompson, Senior Associate of Refugees International, who also visited Albania mid-June; and The Honorable Joseph DioGuardi, President of the Albanian-American Civic League.

Ms. Burkhalter reported on her colleagues' recent mission to Albania, June 15-22. Many refugee households were interviewed by them as they documented the "intensive, systematic destruction and ethnic cleansing of villages in the Decane and Dakovica districts of Kosovo…." Burkhalter stated that "the most significant finding" from the 38 refugees they interviewed was that they knew of 60 family members or friends who had been killed. She further stated that she would not make any projections based on this sample, but concluded that "the number…of 300 dead civilians is almost certainly wrong." Upon documenting the grave human rights violations occurring in Kosovo, the PHR team expressed their concern for the immediate future, in which they stated, "Northern Albania is not prepared to receive a further influx of refugees from Kosovo." The PHR team also expressed a deep concern over the increasing size of the refugee encampments which they feel could "contribute to augmented KLA organizing and recruiting activities…" eventually leading to a possible confrontation with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), which could in turn lead to an "expanded Balkan war."

Larry Thompson urged the international community to "heed the lessons of Bosnia" and noted that Albanian hosts and refugees alike must prepare for the approaching winter. Thompson also suggested that NATO should provide helicopter shuttle service from Tirana to north-

Kosovo, *continued on page 65*

Photo: Chadwick R. Gore

(l. to r.) Holly Burkhalter, Larry Thompson and former Member of Congress Joseph DioGuardi testify on Kosovo.

Belarusian Opposition Leaders Brief Commission

by Orest Deychakiwsky

Two leading Belarusian opposition figures—Yury Khadyka and Stanislav Bogdankevich—analyzed the current political and economic situation in Belarus at a June 19 Commission briefing.

Professor Khadyka, who is Deputy Chairman of the Belarusian Popular Front and a founder of the Belarusian Charter 97 movement, described Belarusian President Lukashenka's efforts to transform Belarus into "a model for rebuilding totalitarianism on post-Soviet territory," especially with the illegitimate 1996 constitutional referendum, in which poll results were falsified and following which the lawfully elected parliament was disbanded. Khadyka criticized Lukashenka's "anti-national" and "openly pro-Moscow" policies, noting at the same time that the government-controlled mass media emphasizes the "brotherhood" between Belarus and Russia, the "Belarusian culture, Belarusian secular education and book publishing are being suppressed."

Khadyka noted that despite Lukashenka's use of police repression and suppression of media and other freedoms, he has been unsuccessful in squelching the opposition. He proposed a step-by-step strategy to deal with Lukashenka's regime, including freeing the mass media from governmental control, stopping political repression, reinstating the rights of the disbanded parliament, forming a new Cabinet of Ministers, and holding presidential elections under the 1994 Constitution (i.e., in 1999 vs. 2002, as called for in Lukashenka's 1996 constitution).

Professor Bogdankevich, the first head of the Central Bank of independent Belarus who resigned in 1995 in protest against Lukashenka's economic and political policies, addressed the issue of Belarus' economic deterioration, citing the low salaries and pensions, the devaluation of the Belarusian ruble, negligible levels of investment, the lack—and even reversal—of privatization, and energy debts to Russia for oil and gas. While opposing investments into the state sector to support the regime, he came out in strong support of direct investments in the Belarusian private sector. With respect to the political situation, Bogdankevich, a deputy of the disbanded parliament and chairman of the United Civic Party, decried the opposition's lack of access to the media and the lack of an independent judiciary in Belarus. He asserted that Lukashenka does not enjoy the support of the majority of Belarusians and that, in genuinely free and democratic elections, he would lose.

Responding to questions from the audience, the opposition leaders described the role of the OSCE mission as useful, especially its work on the various draft election laws. But they noted that despite the mission's presence in Miensk, the conditions for opposition parties and NGOs have not improved. When asked what the U.S. Government could do to support the opposition, the speakers stressed the continued non-recognition of Lukashenka's parliament with continued support for the disbanded parliament; support for the restoration of political rights, including free media; and financial support for monitoring the fairness of future elections.

The full text of the briefing will be published by the Commission and made available to the public. ❑

Moscow Synagogue Hit Again

by John Finerty

The *Jamestown Daily Monitor* of June 23 reported that six weeks after the Marina Roshcha Synagogue in Moscow was bombed (see June *Digest*), the Jewish cemetery next to the same synagogue was vandalized. Several headstones were overturned, and anti-Semitic graffiti ("Death to Jews") was written on a cemetery bench. Besides the two incidents this year, the Marina Roshcha Synagogue was set afire in 1993, and bombed in 1996.

In his weekly radio address of June 22, President Yeltsin warned of what he saw as the "danger of an increase in fascism and racism among young people in Russia," especially to "ideas of national supremacy and anti-Semitism." ❑

Threat, *continued from page 55*

within the internationally recognized right to free expression. Government action has gone further in Austria, France, and Belgium. Official information centers have been established in these countries to disseminate government information on "dangerous" groups, based on the premise that religious beliefs and spiritual convictions can be objectively analyzed by government bureaucrats in their consumer protection role.

The debate on "sects" is not only occurring in national parliaments but also within influential pan-European institutions such as the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly and the European Parliament. The fact that such ominous debates are occurring on a European-wide basis is indicative of the scope of the problem.

This article deals with two manifestations of religious intolerance—new laws on religion that hinder religious liberty, particularly for minority groups, and governmental practices, such as investigations and information centers, focused on minority religious groups.

"This article deals with two manifestations of religious intolerance—new laws on religion that hinder religious liberty, particularly for minority groups, and governmental practices, such as investigations and information centers, focused on minority religious groups."—*Karen Lord*

New Laws Restricting Religious Liberty

Several OSCE countries have passed legislation significantly restricting religious liberty. These restrictions disproportionately affect minority religious communities. In September 1997, both Macedonia and Russia passed laws restricting the rights of "unrecognized" religious groups and instituting numerical requirements, with Russia actually requiring proof of years in existence as a prerequisite for registration. In December 1997, the Austrian Parliament passed legislation on the "legal character of religious communities." On the surface, the law created the possibility for previously unrecognized religious communities to be granted official status. However, legal experts maintain that the principle of equality and the right of association were seriously compromised by this law. On May 1, a new law was passed in Uzbekistan which, among other restrictions, requires 100 Uzbek citizens to sign a religious community's application for registration and criminalizes any unregistered religious activities. Both Turkey and Greece for years have had laws and constitutional provisions that restrict religious liberty for minority communities in the region. Both the new laws and those that have been in existence violate a number of OSCE principles, specifically the commitment found in Section 16.3 of the Vienna Concluding Document to "grant upon their request to communities of believers, practicing or prepared to practice their faith within the constitutional framework of their States, recognition of the status provided for them in the respective countries."

Parliamentary Investigations and Government Information Centers on Minority Religious or Belief Groups

In addition to new laws restricting religious liberty, several Western European parliaments, most notably France, Belgium and Germany, have investigated and reported on the activities of minority religious groups. These parliamentary investigations have had a chilling effect on religious liberty and have fueled a public backlash against groups being investigated or labeled "dangerous." The French Parliament's 1996 report contained a list of "dangerous" groups intended to warn the public against them. The Belgian Parliament's 1997 report had a widely circulated informal appendix that listed 189 groups and included various allegations against many Protestant and Catholic groups, Quakers, Hasidic Jews, Buddhists, and the YWCA. In Belgium, the unofficial appendix appears to have gained significance in the eyes of some public officials who reportedly have denied access to publicly rented buildings for Seventh Day Adventists and Baha'i because they were listed in the unofficial appendix. A German Bundestag "Enquette Commission" recently concluded its two-year investigation into "dangerous sects" and "psycho-groups" and issued a final report on June 18. In September 1997, at a hearing held by the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, an independent evangelical church representative reported a direct correlation between the harassment, vandalism and threats of violence they experience and the investigation by the Bundestag's commission.

Equally alarming has been the establishment of government "information centers" to alert the public to "dangerous" groups. The Austrian, French, and Belgian Governments have set up hotlines for the public and, through government-sponsored advisory centers, distribute information on groups deemed by the government to be "dangerous." In Austrian Government literature, Jehovah's Witnesses are labeled "dangerous" and members of this group report that the stigma associated with this government label is difficult to overcome in Austrian society. Characterizations of religious beliefs by government operated "Advice and Information Centers on Harmful Sects" have the real potential for causing further problems for minority religious groups. Publication of unproven and libelous materials could affect the civil liberties and human rights of members of religious groups. These information centers directly violate the commitments that Austria, France, and Belgium have made as participating States of the OSCE to "foster a climate of mutual tolerance and respect" and excessively entangle the government in the public discussion on religious beliefs.

"...there are several factors that may explain the trends we are observing, pressure from three primary sources seems to be causing a rise of religious intolerance in Europe. The first stems from a political turf war within the religious sector of society, the second from the general skepticism and outright fear of religious or philosophical belief that overlays much of the debate in Western Europe and the third arises out of the developing 'politics of national identity' across Europe."—*Karen Lord*

Possible Explanations for These Observed Trends

While there are several factors that may explain the trends we are observing, pressure from three primary sources seems to be causing a rise of religious intolerance in Europe. The first stems from a political turf war within the religious sector of society, the second from the general skepticism and outright fear of religious or philosophical belief that overlays much of the debate in Western Europe and the third arises out of the developing "politics of national identity" across Europe.

The established churches in Europe are incorporated into the state structure to varying degrees. The benefits of government sponsorship of the majority or approved churches range from preferential status for broadcasting rights to the government actually collecting a tax on behalf of the church. For example, Germany collects a tax for clergy salaries and other expenses from the population that identify themselves as members of a defined number of religious organizations. This creates direct financial incentives for established churches to maintain membership numbers. Some Eastern European countries, such as Romania and Macedonia, also fund clergy salaries and expenses for "recognized" churches. On the other hand, the Church of England does not receive direct money from the British state for clergy salary or upkeep of a building, unless the building is historic in nature. The Church of England does receive money from the state for various charitable enterprises such as schools or homes for the elderly. In The Netherlands, religious communities also do not receive direct funding from the state, although a select group has access to frequencies set aside for religious broadcasting.

Regular church attendance has been steadily declining in Europe over the last few decades and some have noted that the inroads that new religious movements—some of which are not actually all that "new" to Europe—are making may be due to the fact that established churches are not meeting the spiritual needs of the population. Groups such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons have seen an increase in membership, as have independent evangelical and charismatic Protestant churches. Institutionally, the established churches, seemingly feeling threatened, have turned to state legal structures to limit the…ability of new churches to form and function. This is most clearly seen in Russia and Austria, where the new laws restricting religious liberty are fully supported by the dominant Russian Orthodox or Catholic Church. Little thought seems to be given to the dangerous precedent these laws set for the life of all faiths and even the dominant religious faiths.

A second source of pressure underlying governmental intolerance of minority religions is the preference for hu-

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Religious Freedom Commitments Within the OSCE

Since the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, the political landscape has significantly changed in many countries of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. During the Cold War era, the OSCE (formerly the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe) was one of the few forums for dialogue between East and West where human rights issues could be discussed and norms could be agreed upon. Today, the OSCE remains an important arena for discussion and action regarding human rights. All of the countries formerly under Communist governments have acceded to the Helsinki Final Act and subsequent OSCE agreements.

Religious liberty has been an integral part of the OSCE process. From the Helsinki Final Act, to the Vienna and Copenhagen Concluding Documents, the OSCE participating States have affirmed time and time again that religious liberty is a fundamental human right. The freedom to profess and practice a religion alone or in community, the freedom to meet with and exchange information with co-religionists regardless of frontiers, the freedom to freely present to others and discuss one's religious views, and the freedom to change one's religion have all been enshrined in the OSCE documents. Participating States have also committed to eliminating and preventing discrimination based on religious grounds in all fields of civil, political, economic, social and cultural life. Non-interference in the affairs of religious communities, such as selection of personnel, is also central to the OSCE understanding of religious liberty. Religious education in any language is protected along with the right for parents to ensure religious education of their children in line with their own convictions. Participating States have also pledged to allow the training of religious personnel in appropriate institutions.

The following are excerpts of the religious liberty commitments entered into by the participating States to the OSCE. This list is not exhaustive but is intended to give an overview of the obligations that bind OSCE participating States.

Helsinki Final Act (1975)

Basket I, Section VII: *Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief*

The participating States will respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.

Within this framework the participating States will recognize and respect the freedom of the individual to profess and practice, alone or in community with others, religion or belief acting in accordance with the dictates of his own conscience.

Basket III, Section 1d: *Travel for Personal or Professional Reasons*

[The participating States] confirm that religious faiths, institutions and organizations, practicing within the constitutional framework of the participating States, and their representatives can, in the field of their activities, have contacts and meetings among themselves and exchange information.

Madrid Concluding Document (1983)

Questions Relating to Security in Europe—Principles

The participating States reaffirm that they will recognize, respect and furthermore agree to take the action necessary to ensure the freedom of the individual to profess and practice, alone or in community with others, religion or belief acting in accordance with the dictates of his own conscience.

In this context, they will consult, whenever necessary, the religious faiths, institutions and organizations, which act within the constitutional framework of their respective countries.

They will favorably consider application by religious communities of believers practicing or prepared to practice their faith within the constitutional framework of their States, to be granted the status provided for in their respective countries for religious faiths, institutions and organizations.

Human Contacts Section

They will further implement the relevant provisions of the Final Act, so that religious faiths, institutions, organizations, and their representatives can, in the field of their activity, develop contacts and meetings among themselves and exchange information.

Vienna Concluding Document (1989)

Questions Related to Security in Europe—Principles

(11) They [the participating States] confirm that they will respect human rights and fundamental freedom, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.
(16) In order to ensure the freedom of the individual to profess and practice religion or belief, the participating State will, *inter alia*,
(16.1) take effective measures to prevent and eliminate discrimination against individuals or communities on the grounds of religion or belief in the recognition, exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms in all fields of civil, political, economic, social and cultural life, and to ensure the effective equality between believers and non-believers;
(16.2) foster a climate of mutual tolerance and respect between believers of different communities as well as between believers and non-believers;
(16.3) grant upon their request to communities of believers, practicing or prepared to practice their faith within the constitutional framework of their States, recognition of the status provided for them in the respective countries;
(16.4) respect the right of these religious communities to establish and maintain freely accessible places of worship or assembly, organize themselves according to their own hierarchical and institutional structure, select, appoint and replace their personnel in accordance with their respective requirements and standards as well as with any freely accepted arrangement between them and their States, solicit and receive voluntary financial and other contributions.
(16.5) engage in consultation with religious faiths, institutions and organizations in order to achieve a better understanding of the requirements of religious freedom;
(16.6) respect the right of everyone to give and receive religious education in the language of his choice, whether individually or in association with others;
(16.7) in this context respect, *inter alia*, the liberty of parents to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions;
(16.8) allow the training of religious personnel in appropriate institutions;
(16.9) respect the right of individual believers and communities of believers to acquire, possess, and use sacred books, religious publications in the language of their choice and other articles and materials related to the practice of religion or belief;
(16.10) allow religious faiths, institutions and organizations to produce, import and disseminate religious publications and materials;
(16.11) favorably consider the interest of religious communities to participate in public dialogue, including through the mass media.
(17) The participating States recognize that the exercise of the above mentioned rights relating to the freedom of religion or belief may be subject only to such limitations as are provided by law and consistent with their obligations under international law and with their international commitments. They will ensure in their laws and regulations and in their application the full and effective exercise of the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief.
(32) They will allow believers, religious faiths and their representatives, in groups or on an individual basis, to establish and maintain direct personal contacts and communication with each other, in their own and other countries, *inter alia*, through travel, pilgrimages and participation in assemblies and other religious events. In this context and commensurate with such contacts and events, those concerned will be allowed to acquire, receive and carry with them religious publications and objects related to the practice of their religion or belief.

Copenhagen Concluding Document (1990)

(9.1) [The participating States reaffirm that] everyone will have the right to freedom of expression including the right to communication. This right will include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. The exercise of this right may be subject only to such restrictions as are prescribed by law and are consistent with international standards.
(9.4) [The participating States reaffirm that] everyone will have the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. This right includes freedom to change one's religion or belief and freedom to manifest one's religion or belief, either alone or in community with others, in public or in private, through worship, teaching, practice and observance. The exercise of these rights may be subject only to such restrictions as are prescribed by law and are consistent with international standards. ❑

1997 OSCE Budget Converted to U.S. Dollars

(exchange rate as of June 30, 1998: 1 ATS = 0.07845 US$)

Missions		$ 33,992,033
OSCE Mission in Bosnia	*$19,519,329*	
OSCE Mission to Croatia	*$ 6,238,586.57*	
Other OSCE Missions	*$ 8,234,118*	
General Fund		$ 10,702,097
Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights		$ 3,946,449
Minsk Conference		$ 2,237,426
(deals with Nagorno-Karabakh negotiations)		
High Commissioner on National Minorities		$ 998,218
OSCE Budget for 1997		**$ 51,876,223**
as of November 21, 1997		
Voluntary Contributions for elections in Bosnia		$ 53,014,459
Total for 1997		**$ 104,890,682**

1998 OSCE Budget Converted to U.S. Dollars

Missions		$ 92,841,681
OSCE Activities in Bosnia	*$ 63,680,395.71**	
OSCE Mission to Croatia	*$ 22,437,737.65 ***	
Other OSCE Missions	*$ 6,723,547.53*	
General Fund		$ 11,763,466
Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights		$ 3,858,269
Minsk Conference		$ 2,428,041
(deals with Nagorno-Karabakh negotiations)		
High Commissioner on National Minorities		$ 1,150,108
Representative on Freedom of the Media		$ 385,226
(New post in 1998)		
OSCE Budget for 1998		**$ 112,426,791**
as of June 1998		

*This includes the supplementary budget for election supervision. In 1997, this was covered by voluntary funds; it is now covered under the scale of distribution for Large OSCE Missions and Projects established by the 1997 Copenhagen Ministerial.

**During 1998, the Croatia Mission is expanding to assume duties previously carried out by the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES). Accordingly, the costs of the Mission have expanded.

Regular Scale of Distribution for the OSCE

as of June 30, 1998

Country	%	Country	%	Country	%
France	9.00	Poland	1.40	Croatia	0.19
Germany	9.00			Cyprus	0.19
Italy	9.00	Turkey	1.00	Estonia	0.19
Russian Federation	9.00			Iceland	0.19
United Kingdom	9.00	Belarus	0.70	Latvia	0.19
United States	9.00	Greece	0.70	Macedonia	0.19
		Hungary	0.70	Lithuania	0.19
Canada	5.45	Romania	0.70	Moldova	0.19
				Slovenia	0.19
Spain	3.65	Czech Republic	0.67		
				Armenia	0.185
Belgium	3.55	Bulgaria	0.55	Azerbaijan	0.185
Netherlands	3.55	Ireland	0.55	Georgia	0.185
Sweden	3.55	Kazakhstan	0.55	Kyrgyzstan	0.185
		Luxembourg	0.55	Tajikistan	0.185
Switzerland	2.30	Portugal	0.55	Turkmenistan	0.185
		Uzbekistan	0.55		
Austria	2.05	Yugoslavia	0.55	Andorra	0.125
Denmark	2.05			Holy See	0.125
Finland	2.05	Slovakia	0.33	Liechtenstein	0.125
Norway	2.05			Malta	0.125
		Albania	0.19	Monaco	0.125
Ukraine	1.75	Bosnia-Herzegovina	0.19	San Marino	0.125

Explanatory Note on the Scale of Distribution

Traditionally, all OSCE costs have been borne according to a regular scale of distribution (see chart, "Regular Scale of Distribution for the OSCE"). When the scale of distribution was first established in 1973, the United States was assessed 8.8 percent; currently, that rate is 9.00 percent.

When the OSCE began to mount large-scale missions—notably the Mission to Bosnia-Herzegovina—a number of microstates complained that their share of the costs for such missions could outstrip their entire annual defense budget. To make such large-scale missions and projects feasible, agreement was reached, as a stop-gap measure, to fund them through voluntary contributions. U.S. voluntary contributions for OSCE missions have, at times, constituted 30 percent of the budget.

The system of voluntary contributions presented difficulties for many governments, in part because of the effort that ad hoc fundraising entails. In addition, many governments preferred a more regularized system of payments for accounting purposes. The United States also believed that a different system of payment for large-scale missions and projects could serve to lower its overall costs. Accordingly, agreement was reached to implement, beginning March 15, 1998, a new scale of distribution for large OSCE missions and projects (see chart, "Scale for large OSCE missions and projects," p. 64).

Currently, the only OSCE activities which are paid for under this scale are the OSCE Mission to Bosnia-Herzegovina and the OSCE Mission to Croatia. Voluntary contributions are still encouraged and final bills are not sent out until the budgeted amount is lowered accordingly. ❑

Scale for Large OSCE Missions and Projects

as of December 16, 1997

Country	%	Country	%	Country	%
United States	12.40	Luxembourg	0.63	Azerbaijan	0.02
France	10.34	Greece	0.53	Bosnia & Herzegovina	0.02
Germany	10.34	Hungary	0.53	Estonia	0.02
Italy	10.34	Czech Republic	0.50	Georgia	0.02
United Kingdom	10.34	Portugal	0.41	Holy See	0.02
Russian Fed.	5.50	Slovak Republic	0.25	Kyrgyzstan	0.02
Canada	5.45	Iceland	0.21	Latvia	0.02
Spain	4.20	Ukraine	0.18	Liechtenstein	0.02
Belgium	4.07	Croatia	0.14	Lithuania	0.02
Netherlands	4.07	Cyprus	0.14	Malta	0.02
Sweden	4.07	Slovenia	0.14	Moldova	0.02
Switzerland	2.65	Belarus	0.07	Monaco	0.02
Austria	2.36	Romania	0.07	San Marino	0.02
Denmark	2.36	Bulgaria	0.06	Tajikistan	0.02
Finland	2.36	Kazakhstan	0.06	the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	0.02
Norway	2.36	Uzbekistan	0.06	Turkmenistan	0.02
Poland	1.05	Albania	0.02	**Total**	**100.00**
Turkey	0.75	Andorra	0.02		
Ireland	0.63	Armenia	0.02		

Threat, *continued from page 59*

manism, with its reverence for relativism, by the intellectual elite in Europe. A new intolerance has arisen for individuals espousing beliefs that are perceived as absolutist in any manner. In this climate, religious fervor is viewed as suspect, and this has led to the marginalization of religious or philosophical ideals or principles in the European public debate. Labels such as "dangerous or totalitarian sect," "cult," and "brainwashing" are too easily bantered about and have led to a general hysteria evidenced in the media and in public opinion, particularly in France and Germany, where being labeled a "sect" or "sect-sympathizer" can lead to one's professional demise. Policymakers unable or unwilling to discern the difference between criminal acts committed by an individual as opposed to a group have a tendency to feed this public hysteria by calling for restrictions on a group based on reported actions of its members.

Finally, traditional nationalistic, patriotic, political forces are increasingly engaged in promoting the "politics of national identity" across Europe. As national borders decrease in importance and pan-European institutions gain power, these forces feel fundamentally threatened. Thus, "foreign" influences of all kinds, but particularly cultural and religious developments not seen as "native" or "authentic," come under harsh scrutiny and sometimes attack. Government action to prevent, limit, or simply chill the growth of such movements is politically popular. From this has risen continent-spanning informal networks of politicians, government bureaucrats, religious leaders, and cultural figures sharing information and collaborating to prevent the growth and spread of unwanted religious groups and philosophies. The significance of the personal contacts and networks engaged in this work cannot be overstated.

Conclusion

The national governments in Europe must be called back to their religious liberty commitments. By far the clearest and most comprehensive commitments on religious liberty found in any international instruments are enunciated in the OSCE documents (see accompanying article, p. 60). These commitments are morally persuasive and should be carefully considered whenever government touches and begins to tread upon one of the most basic of human rights, the right to thought, conscience, religion, or belief. ❑

Latvia: Referendum on Citizenship Law Changes?

by John Finerty

Contrary to expectations, Latvian President Guntis Ulmanis did not sign into law a bill containing changes to that country's legislation on citizenship. Instead, the issue may go to a nationwide referendum. The changes in the citizenship legislation were precipitated when mostly Russian-speaking senior citizens convened a March 3rd demonstration against an increase in utility rate hikes in Riga and the gathering turned into a confrontation with police. The incident caused tension and recriminations between Latvia and Russia, with Moscow again leveling strident complaints about alleged human rights violations against native Russian speakers in Latvia.

As a result of the demonstration, on June 22 the Latvian parliament passed two major amendments to its citizenship legislation. First, the "windows" system for naturalization was removed, i.e., anyone who wished to take the citizenship test could apply immediately, regardless of age. Secondly, children born to stateless parents since the re-establishment of independent Latvia would be granted citizenship upon the application of the parents, if the parents are themselves stateless.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the European Union welcomed these changes. Russia, however, was still dissatisfied, calling the changes "cosmetic."

Under the Latvian Constitution (para. 72) and the 1994 Law on Referenda, however, legislation may not be promulgated by the President if more than one-third of the legislators request a referendum, and if 10 percent of the registered voters (approximately 130,000) sign a petition requesting a referendum on the issue in question. In this case, 38 Latvian legislators out of 100 called for a referendum on the amendments to the citizenship law.

The Washington-based Jamestown Foundation reported July 1 that President Ulmanis called the legislators' move "electoral populism" and "passing the buck from the parliament to the people." ❑

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ern Albania for Albanian and international officials, as well as all-terrain vehicles for use in the almost inaccessible mountain border regions.

Former Congressman Joseph DioGuardi testified that the situation in Kosovo is " a human crisis of the highest order" and argued that while "tough sanctions" were placed on Milosevic, U.S. foreign policy in the Balkans had failed. Mr. DioGuardi questioned why the State Department waited so long to act and why Serbian military and paramilitary police have not been forced to withdraw from Kosovo in line with the international community's demands, while calling for immediate U.S. and NATO involvement to prevent the onset of another Balkan war. He concluded by calling upon the United States to "stand up for its own principles, and demand compliance with international human rights conventions…."

The hearing ended with all witnesses expressing grave concern over the deteriorating humanitarian conditions in the region and calling for a substantial U.S. and NATO response. (*Kelle McGill and Ivanka Gajecky contributed to this article.)* ❑

Nikitin Day in San Francisco

by John Finerty

Mayor Willie Brown declared June 25 to be "Alexander Nikitin Day" in San Francisco as representatives of human rights and environmental defense organizations staged a rally in front of the Russian consulate to protest the treatment of the environmental activist and former Russian Navy Captain. Statements in support of Nikitin by Commission Co-Chairman Rep. Christopher H. Smith (R-NJ),Commission Ranking Minority Member Rep. Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD), and Representative David Skaggs (D-CO) were read at the rally.

Nikitin has been charged with treason for assisting in the publication of material exposing irresponsible dumping of nuclear waste by the Russian Navy in the White Sea region (see previous issues of *Digest*). After six unsuccessful indictment attempts, prosecutors now claim to have produced a seventh, constitutionally valid, indictment against Nikitin. In response, three Russian admirals (one of whom is Nikitin's father-in-law) have written a detailed refutation of the charges. ❑

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