

# Intolerance in Contemporary Russia



October 15, 2002

**Briefing of the  
Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe**

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The Helsinki process, formally titled the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, traces its origin to the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in Finland on August 1, 1975, by the leaders of 33 European countries, the United States and Canada. As of January 1, 1995, the Helsinki process was renamed the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The membership of the OSCE has expanded to 55 participating States, reflecting the breakup of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia.

The OSCE Secretariat is in Vienna, Austria, where weekly meetings of the participating States' permanent representatives are held. In addition, specialized seminars and meetings are convened in various locations. Periodic consultations are held among Senior Officials, Ministers and Heads of State or Government.

Although the OSCE continues to engage in standard setting in the fields of military security, economic and environmental cooperation, and human rights and humanitarian concerns, the Organization is primarily focused on initiatives designed to prevent, manage and resolve conflict within and among the participating States. The Organization deploys numerous missions and field activities located in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. The website of the OSCE is: <[www.osce.org](http://www.osce.org)>.

## **ABOUT THE COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE**

The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, also known as the Helsinki Commission, is a U.S. Government agency created in 1976 to monitor and encourage compliance by the participating States with their OSCE commitments, with a particular emphasis on human rights.

The Commission consists of nine members from the United States Senate, nine members from the House of Representatives, and one member each from the Departments of State, Defense and Commerce. The positions of Chair and Co-Chair rotate between the Senate and House every two years, when a new Congress convenes. A professional staff assists the Commissioners in their work.

In fulfilling its mandate, the Commission gathers and disseminates relevant information to the U.S. Congress and the public by convening hearings, issuing reports that reflect the views of Members of the Commission and/or its staff, and providing details about the activities of the Helsinki process and developments in OSCE participating States.

The Commission also contributes to the formulation and execution of U.S. policy regarding the OSCE, including through Member and staff participation on U.S. Delegations to OSCE meetings. Members of the Commission have regular contact with parliamentarians, government officials, representatives of non-governmental organizations, and private individuals from participating States. The website of the Commission is: <[www.csce.gov](http://www.csce.gov)>.

# INTOLERANCE IN CONTEMPORARY RUSSIA

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## PARTICIPANTS

	Page
Donald Kursch, Senior Advisor, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe .....	1
Ludmilla Alexeyeva, Chair, Moscow Helsinki Group .....	2
Tanya Lokshina, Executive Director, Moscow Helsinki Group .	3
Micah Naftalin, Executive Director, Union of Councils for Jews in the Former Soviet Union .....	7
Dr. Leonid Stonov, former Moscow <i>Refusenik</i> , and Director of International Bureau, Union of Councils for Jews in the Former Soviet Union.....	17

## APPENDICES

Prepared Statement of Tanya Lokshina, Executive Director, Moscow Helsinki Group .....	21
Prepared Statement of Micah Naftalin, Executive Director, Union of Councils for Jews in the Former Soviet Union.....	23

# INTOLERANCE IN CONTEMPORARY RUSSIA

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COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE,  
WASHINGTON, DC

The briefing was held at 10:00 a.m. in Room 2255, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC, Donald Kursch, Senior Advisor, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, moderating.

*Panelists present:* Ludmilla Alexeyeva, Chair, Moscow Helsinki Group; Tanya Lokshina, Executive Director, Moscow Helsinki Group; Micah Naftalin, Executive Director, Union of Councils for Jews in the Former Soviet Union; and Dr. Leonid Stonov, former Moscow *refusenik* and Director of International Bureau, Union of Councils for Jews in the Former Soviet Union.

Mr. KURSCH. Good morning. My name is Don Kursch. I am from the Helsinki Commission, and I would like to welcome you this morning to our briefing on nationalism, xenophobia and intolerance in contemporary Russia.

I very much regret that, in this intense pre-election period, none of our Commissioners are available to attend today's session. However, this should not be interpreted in any way to indicate a reduction of their intense interest in this general issue as reflected in the Commission's recent hearing on anti-Semitism in the OSCE area and the very strong stance our Commissioners took on the question of xenophobia and anti-Semitism at the July 2002 Berlin meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

Developments in Russia are of particular interest to the Commission and our Commissioners. In terms of population, Russia is the OSCE's second largest country, after the United States, with a very diverse population within its extensive borders.

For those such as myself who were directly involved with our Cold War relationship with the Soviet Union a quarter of a century ago, we can only welcome the great increase in openness and democracy that has taken place in today's Russia. We see that a vibrant civil society is being created, and that the country's talented citizens are being offered the opportunity to realize their potential, perhaps to a greater extent than at any other time in Russia's history. We are most hopeful that, in the new environment, many more opportunities for creative partnerships between our two countries and our citizens will be created. Certainly, we have come a very long way from where we were.

As an OSCE member, the Russian Government has pledged to promote tolerance and nondiscrimination and counter threats to security such as intolerance, aggressive nationalism, racist chauvinism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism. Nevertheless, many manifestations of bigotry and anti-Semitism have emerged. Indeed, in the open environment that

now prevails, it is much easier for the proponents of bigotry to propagate their unwelcome messages.

We all share a great interest in trying to make sure that messages of hatred will be rejected by the overwhelming majority of Russian citizens. Achieving success in the fight against intolerance demands strong leadership by the Russian Government and the Duma to provide effective legislation, regulations and standards. Training and sensitizing public officials, particular the judiciary and law enforcement community, to be proactive in dealing with attacks on religious and ethnic minorities is critical. Leadership needs to set an example, as did President Putin when he publicly hailed the courage of Tatyana Sapunova who was seriously injured earlier this year when tearing down anti-Semitic posters that had been booby-trapped. In rising to this challenge, we hope that Russia and its leaders will put to full use the best practices that have been developed in the U.S. and in other OSCE countries as well as learning from our past mistakes.

Today, we are very pleased to have several individuals who know the current situation in Russia very well. Ludmilla Alexeyeva, the Chairperson of the Moscow Helsinki Group, will present her organization's report entitled "Nationalism, Xenophobia and Intolerance in Contemporary Russia." She will be followed by Micah Naftalin, executive director of UCSJ: the Union of Councils for Jews in the Former Soviet Union. Mr. Naftalin will give a summary of his group's study on anti-Semitism, xenophobia and religious persecution in Russia's regions. I would also like to introduce Mr. Leonid Stonov of UCSJ and Tatyana Lokshina, the executive director from the Moscow Helsinki Group, whom I had the privilege of meeting a couple of weeks ago in Warsaw.

Thank you, and would you start?

Ms. ALEXEYeva. Thank you. I know my English is terrible, but my Russian is pretty good. For this reason, I will speak in English only several phrases, and after, Tatyana Lokshina will translate for me. Believe me, it will be much easier for you. [Through translator.] The Moscow Helsinki Group specializes in the monitoring of the human rights situation across the territory of the Russian Federation.

Since 1998, we have been conducting systematic monitoring of different aspects of the human rights situation in all of the 89 regions of Russia. Also, last year, we started, besides the already mentioned systematic monitoring, to carry out thematic monitoring projects in connection with the different aspects of the human rights situation that seem to be particularly dangerous at the moment.

This report on nationalism, xenophobia and intolerance in Russia is our first thematic report, which is quite unfortunate really because it only testifies to the gravity of the situation.

It should be noted that xenophobia and aggressive nationalism are becoming more and more of a great problem in contemporary Russia in recent years. Certainly, the war that has been going on in Chechnya, with just a small gap between, for 10 years, is playing an important role in this respect.

Just like with any war, the population is bound to be xenophobic in connection with the opposing side to the conflict. In this case, it appears to be relevant not only in respect to the Chechens, but in respect to the peoples of the Caucasus in general.

I have to emphasize that the phenomenon that we call Caucasophobia is definitely the most serious problem that Russia is faced with today. It is very widespread among the population in general, at all levels.

This Caucasophobia has indeed become so prominent that, to a certain extent, it has substituted for anti-Semitism within the general population. At the same time, of course,

there are some radical political groups for whom anti-Semitism is of primary importance.

But while something is being done by the state to counter anti-Semitism—for example, as was mentioned by the moderator, actions like awarding Tatyana Sapunova, the victim of an anti-Semitic attack, with a decoration—at the same time, nothing at all is being done to counter Caucasophobia to prevent outbursts of hatred against the peoples of the Caucasus.

I was absolutely struck by the relatively recent statement of the Governor of the Krasnodar Region, Alexander Tkachev, who emphasized that in the territory of his region people with typical Russian last names—and he actually cited the typical endings of Russian last names—can live freely. But as far as people with Georgian last names or Armenian last names—and he also quoted the typical endings for those last names—those people have no place in the territory of the Krasnodar Region.

In my opinion, if a regional leader, if an official with such a high status makes this kind of statement, some immediate reaction, some immediate condemnation has to follow from the President of the Russian Federation who, according to the Constitution of the Russian Federation, is to guarantee rights and freedoms of citizens.

Also in full accordance with his mandate, the Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation has to initiate criminal proceedings against the Governor of the Krasnodar Region because it is a violation of the Constitution of the Russian Federation that stipulates full equality and non-discrimination between peoples in the territory of the Russian Federation.

Unfortunately, neither the President nor the Prosecutor General has actually fulfilled their duty and carried out the relevant action.

From my point of view, this indeed presents a grave danger. Because if xenophobia and intolerance are being neglected by the authorities on the one hand, and are even being supported to a certain extent by the authorities, that is definitely conducive to the expansion and reinforcement of such attitudes.

So under the circumstances we believed it was our duty to study the situation with nationalism, xenophobia and intolerance in depth in all the regions of Russia, and to produce such a report.

This is our contribution to efforts made to improve this situation. I will therefore pass the floor to Tanya Lokshina, who was editor of this report and who headed the project on monitoring of xenophobia and nationalism. She is also one of the authors of the report.

Ms. LOKSHINA. I would like to draw your attention to this book: *Nationalism, Xenophobia and Intolerance in Contemporary Russia*. It is a big one, so I do not quite expect that all the people present in this room are actually going to read it from the first page to the last page, as the volume is made up of more than 450 pages. This I know as one of the authors and chief editor.

But just to draw your attention to the introduction, which is a 60-page introduction, again, it has three parts to it.

I will be very brief. The first part of the introduction is a general description of the situation with xenophobia and intolerance in Russia, where we tried to outline the root causes and the scope of the problem.

The second part of the introduction is the regional information digest, where we present in concise form the results of regional monitoring. We have not spoken about all of the 89 regions, but simply chose to have some examples that are particularly striking or illustrative to be included into this book.

Finally, the third section of the introduction is recommendations. Not surprisingly, about five pages of recommendations only.

As far as the rest of the book is concerned, there are essays and articles written by different authors on the basis of our monitoring findings, as well as on the basis of their own research. As one can see from the table of contents, we basically tried to study such problems as the state and how the state neglects and even dallies with nationalism and xenophobia, how nationalism and xenophobia are reflected in political and public life.

We also studied such phenomenon as religious xenophobia, which was particularly fascinating as very little research has been done on the subject so far in Russia. That topic, again, is now quite relevant in connection with the recent anti-Catholic campaign that has been very much promoted and supported by the Russia state. As many of you probably know, a number of Catholic clerics were denied Russian visas quite recently, which testifies to the fact that the Russian state meddles with religious life because it is the state that has the power to either give or deny a visa.

Also we studied, naturally, the situation of particularly vulnerable groups. These groups, in our opinion, are Chechens, Jews, and Meskhetian Turks. The latter are an ethnic minority residing in the Krasnodar Region. The scope of discrimination against the Meskhetian Turks is totally unprecedented even in Russia.

Among the most vulnerable groups is also the Roma, whose situation is quite dire. It is very similar to the situation of the Roma in Central and Eastern Europe, but in Russia the Roma represents only a very small minority, no attention is paid to them, and they are being pretty much ignored in their plight.

Finally, we decided to include in this book, by way of example, several regional reports just to show the diversity of the situations in different regions. We chose such drastically different places as St. Petersburg, and the Chechen Republic (from the point of view of xenophobia within the Chechen Republic; not xenophobia against the Chechens by the Russian population). Also the Altai Territory. The situation in the Altai Territory is rather typical for an average Russian region.

I will now list the main points and the conclusions that we came to in the course of the monitoring effort, and these conclusions are all reflected in the book.

The Russian authorities, in their public rhetoric, claim an adherence to the principles of tolerance and equality. They also claim that they are striving to have a dialogue with groups of ethnic and religious minorities. The state insists that various nations and cultures in the country live in peace and harmony and that the struggle with political extremism and counteraction to xenophobia and intolerance, are at the center of attention of President Putin, the government and the law enforcement agencies.

However, we assert that during the last several years, a menacing growth in xenophobia and nationalistic moods evidenced itself in Russian society. Such negative views as Chechenophobia, Caucasophobia, Romaphobia and a general intolerance toward ethnic migrants and religious minorities intensified.

The authorities persistently referred to a lack of violence on racial and ethnic grounds as an indicator of the harmony in inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations. However, the events in 2001–2002 completely refute such claims. Russia is now experiencing an unprecedented amount of crime based on racial and ethnic hatred; moreover, clashes between representatives of various ethnic groups, are taking place. The last clash occurred in the town of Krasnoarmeisk, in the Moscow Region, where a conflict broke out between Rus-



sians and Armenians. Attacks on racial grounds by so-called skinheads are practically a routine.

The latest phenomenon is becoming particularly dangerous. In 2001 in Moscow, two pogroms took place. The second one, which occurred at the end of October, being particularly outrageous, as up to 300 skinheads participated and there were dead and wounded.

Despite what these events say for themselves, the law enforcement agencies refuse to acknowledge the growth of violent crimes on racial grounds. In the overwhelming majority of cases, either the criminals remained unpunished or the investigative and judicial agencies ignore the racist component of the act. Until recently, the authorities, in fact, did not take into account the increase of the activity of extreme youth groups.

Due to inaction of law enforcement, in particular, there was a riot in the center of Moscow in June 2002 perpetrated by football fans among whom skinheads were particularly active. During these riots, crimes on racial grounds also took place.

The situation in Moscow and in the Moscow Region, the two places that attract a considerable part of the migration flows, is significant, but not unique. An analogous situation has developed in the majority of large cities in the European part of the country and in the Ural Region. In a number of regions, particularly in the south of Russia, Russian authorities themselves serve as spreaders of racist and xenophobic moods, patronize nationalistic groups and promote intolerance in society.

The situation in the Krasnodar Territory, to which Ludmilla Alexeyeva has already referred, where the aggressive nationalist rhetoric of the authorities is combined with openly discriminatory policies and practices is completely unacceptable.

At the same time, neither the President nor the federal authorities are condemning the situation or trying to intervene. Even more so, the President and some top officials are making excuses for the violations in the Krasnodar Territory, referring to certain difficulties that the region is experiencing due to a complex migration situation, as if migration could be an excuse for open, outrageous discrimination.

We maintain that, despite the declarations about unacceptability of nationalism in all forms and public gestures of this kind, the federal authorities are not taking effective measures to stop the discriminatory practices in the region. Even more so, such practices are often supported by the federal power.

Federal law on countering extremist activities sponsored by the executive branch and passed in the summer of 2002 is presented as the core of anti-racist efforts of the state. During the law's preparation, the state constantly referred to this law as a vital necessity in the struggle against aggressive nationalistic groups. However, we are convinced that the new law would not facilitate the work of the law enforcement aimed against crimes committed on racial grounds because its definitions and provisions are too broad and vague. At the same time, the law may be used for selective persecution of oppositional political and public groups.

Personally, I know of a Russian NGO in the south of the country that has been threatened by the law enforcement that the new law on countering extremist activities is going to be used specifically to persecute its activists.

Constant statements by the law enforcement about the absence of an adequate normative base was one reason for the appearance of this anti-extremist law. Many experts repeatedly pointed out at the same time that the already existing criminal code and laws about public stations and mass media were completely sufficient to conduct an effective struggle against national extremists, and no additional legislation was necessary.

It seems to us that one reason for the extremely limited effectiveness of the vehicle of law enforcement agencies is the pervasiveness of xenophobic views among a large part of the law enforcement officials themselves. Complaints about the arbitrariness of police officers when dealing with representatives of ethnic minorities are regularly submitted to human rights organizations in Moscow and in the region. There are also complaints about ethnic profiling and ethnic insults. Chechens most often are the victims of such practices. The war in Chechnya continues to remain the principal factor that determines the institutional character of ethnic xenophobia in activities of law enforcement agencies.

The ongoing participation on rotational basis of the regional special task police units and other subdivisions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the military conflict promotes the diffusion of xenophobic moods, aggressive attitudes toward ethnic minorities and demonization of peoples of the Caucasus.

We call upon the Russian authorities with the following basic recommendations regarding the protection of minorities and the establishment of a climate of tolerance in the country.

High-ranking state officials must energetically come forward with condemnations of specific displays of nationalism and xenophobia, especially those displays that are violent in character.

Nationalistic propaganda, particularly propaganda coming from officials at all levels, must be effectively stopped and condemned.

Law enforcement and other state agencies must stop discriminatory practices with respect to the Chechens, Kurds, Meskhetian Turks, Roma and other vulnerable ethnic groups.

The Russian Federation must develop cooperation with regional and international agencies, treaty bodies and others in order to struggle against racism, xenophobia, discrimination and intolerance, and to expand the use of the appropriate international human rights mechanisms that offer preventive measures and aim at eliminating racism, xenophobia, discrimination and intolerance.

The introduction of educational programs that focus on the dangers of racism, nationalism and xenophobia and that foster respectful attitudes toward cultural diversities in officials, especially in police officials, judges and law enforcement, is vitally important in Russia. We hope that U.S. officials, in their negotiations with the Russian state, will also draw upon this recommendation.

To overcome the problem, the first step is necessarily to admit to the very existence of the problem. Today the Russian authorities are not ready to admit the problem yet.

I was a witness myself of a statement made by the Russian delegation at the last session of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, where the Russian delegate, speaking under the item on racism and discrimination on the agenda of the Commission, said specifically that racism and discrimination do not present a problem in the Russian Federation, that ethnic and religious relations are perfectly harmonious, and that nothing can be improved in any case as racial crimes are basically nonexistent and when such crimes happen, and they are very rare, the law enforcement always does everything possible to find the perpetrators and to have them face the justice.

Such was the official statement made by the Russian delegation at the largest human rights forum and all our conclusions, all the findings that we have made in the course of our monitoring efforts show quite the opposite. Therefore the first step, of course, that the Russian state should take is admitting that the problem does exist.

Thank you.

Mr. KURSCH. Thank you.

Mr. Naftalin?

Mr. NAFTALIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much for your opening remarks. I am glad to be here with Ludmilla. The Moscow Helsinki Group and UCSJ have been partners off and on for 25 years. We value that relationship very much.

I am glad Mr. Stonov is with us. He coordinates all of our bureaus across the former Soviet Union.

Nikolai Butkevich, who is general editor of our report, is absent this morning because of illness in his family.

Mr. Chairman, I recognize the difficulty of gaining the attention of the public or of policy makers for this subject at a time when questions of international terrorism, of weapons inspections, themes of war and peace and America's obligations are the riveting issues of the day.

Let me say that in my report—my presentation today—I am basing most of the descriptive material relating to anti-Semitism directly from our report.

Much of our report also is completely consistent with Ludmilla's report on xenophobia.

The policy aspects of my statement have been added and are not part of the report proper. However, I make the point that isn't it precisely one of the critical by-products of 9/11 that we are now able to tune into signals that were always out there? It is my hope to assert in the policy aspects of my presentation a new paradigm of human rights and national security.

Xenophobia, of which anti-Semitism is a central component, represents the opposite side of the same coin as extremism and terrorism, and as such needs to be ranked as a major category of human rights violation. Moreover, monitoring strategies to combat it are available, as our reports demonstrate.

In light of 9/11, they must now rank with weapons inspection in our national security arsenal. The collective failure of the NGO and intelligence communities to adequately address these connections was, in my judgment, an element of the colossal failure of imagination that permitted the success of extremism, terrorism, whether it is in the Middle East or in Russia or at the World Trade Center or the Pentagon.

Raging racism demonstrates a dangerous breakdown of rule of law that threatens Russia's economic and political stability and vulnerability to extremism and terrorism. It calls out for American vigilance and American assistance to Russia.

Our report is based on a year-long monitoring throughout 2001 by our Moscow bureau on human rights, directed by Alexander Brod. The heart of the work is the presentation of 250 pages of detailed reports of incidents in 63 of Russia's 89 regions, where almost all of the Jews live in the country.

No summary can adequately convey the abject and cumulative horror one finds by reading the hundreds of incidents of hate crimes and hate speech described in this report, page by page, region by region. But beyond the human tragedy this is a document, I believe, of a failed criminal justice system that it is in both Russia's and America's interest to repair.

The report and the very capability to produce it carries policy implications for President Bush and President Putin as they strive to combat international and domestic ter-

rorism. First and foremost, in addition to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, we must never again forget that words and behavior also matter.

The very length of our report is but a palpable reminder that racists do not pursue their murderous goals by stealth. They pursue conquest through intimidation, they announce their intentions in advance, they thus can be interdicted through effective monitoring and the holding of their host governments accountable for their actions.

The anti-Jewish pogromist threat from the floor of the Russian Duma in the late 1990s signaled the build-up of anti-Semitic and xenophobic invective at the grassroots level and violence leading to today's rampaging gangs of neo-Nazi skinheads, for example.

But their audacity and impunity are also their weakness if we can learn to take them seriously. Because, unlike the difficulties of inspections and seeking well-concealed weapons, extremists are more often easily identified and monitored, and they depend on the acquiescence, if not the collaboration, of their host government.

I am optimistic in making these observations because I believe our government has never been as well-positioned to make human rights an integral element of national security policy as it is today.

One thing that is new and quite remarkable is the President's National Security Strategy that he published in September. I believe this is unprecedented in the extent and priority it places on human rights and American values.

I also note that President Putin is also well-served in these pursuits by the exemplary effort of Russia's human rights ombudsman, Professor Oleg Mironov, who last Friday joined with our Moscow bureau director in publicly signing a formal agreement of cooperation in furtherance of human rights, combating anti-Semitism and xenophobia generally.

In fact, Professor Mironov asked to write an introduction to our Russian translation of this report, which we will be issuing in a few weeks. We were delighted with that offer.

Russia's vast and tenuously guarded stockpile of materials and components of nuclear weaponry make it a major target for countries and terrorists alike who would hope to purchase or steal nuclear capabilities for mass destruction.

Our report documents one dimension of Russia's, and therefore America's, vulnerability. Our report reflects a 30-percent increase in incidents compared to last year.

An apt summary of the report's findings is cited in a quotation that introduces our executive summary by no less an authority than Izvestia. "Hatred exists everywhere, but there are few places where the assortment of hatred is as broad as it is in our country," they said. "There are few places where society is so indifferent to it.

"In Germany, each skinhead attack on Turks, Kurds or Jews becomes a matter of great alarm for the police and thousands-strong public demonstrations against extremism and anti-Semitism and xenophobia. In our country, such things do not provoke a very notable reaction, but what is noticeable are the consequences."

Among many responses to such extremism, Russian President Vladimir Putin declared on July 25th, "If we allow the development of bacillus of chauvinism or nationalist or religious intolerance, we will destroy the country."

Despite the excellent rhetoric, governmental response has been minimal. Many regional authorities openly collaborate with neo-Nazis. Perpetrators of hate crimes, therefore essentially behave with impunity.

The consequences of permissive attitudes toward hate groups is especially clear in Moscow, where for years police have ignored skinhead attacks against foreign students, dark-skinned market traders and even diplomats from African and Asian countries.

Only now when the problem has become so acute that skinhead violence is an almost daily event in Moscow, have the city authorities begun to take the skinhead problem seriously. We hope it is not too late to contain the growth of these groups who have increased their membership and geographical growth and scope to a stunning degree.

This trend of passive state anti-Semitism and racism is even more apparent in the judicial branch where there are numerous examples of judges refusing to punish anti-Semites and other extremists, even when they have clearly violated the law.

The State Duma remains a hot bed of anti-Semitism, racism, especially among deputies from the Communist Party and the Liberal Democratic Party. State Duma deputies from Bryansk and Krasnodarski Krai regularly violate laws against public hate speech, as does Deputy Speaker Vladimir Zhirinovskiy.

In 2001, hate literature was openly sold in the State Duma, including David Duke's *The Jewish Question Through the Eyes of an American*, and many other anti-Semitic newspapers.

On the regional level, President Putin has made some impressive progress in his efforts to reverse years of radical decentralization under the Yeltsin administration.

However, despite the appearance of strength, the central government remains weak, and this weakness, when combined with the indifference of many central government officials to the problems of anti-Semitism, racism, religious persecution and other human rights violations, has helped create a system of government in which regional leaders make some basic concessions to the Kremlin in return for the right to treat their citizens almost any way they choose.

In recent weeks, and so not covered in our report, two related allegations of impropriety by the Kremlin raises certain cognitive dissonance when compared to President Putin's public exhortations against extremism and anti-Semitism. These improprieties lend credence to our concern that the President's rhetoric is far from matched by action.

First, the Ministry of Justice has recently approved quite expeditiously the registration of a new political party, the National Power Party, NDPR, whose leaders are recognized neo-Nazis and whose web site is explicitly anti-Semitic.

In a second case, according to the September 23 *Novaya Gazeta*, while it is well-known that Putin's political party, Unity, has created a youth organization called Walking Together, the paper asserts that these youth leaders are also skinhead leaders. These are based on interviews of some of those people. One common interest of the two groups is to disrupt anti-globalist demonstrations.

Controlling Nazi parties and youth organizations so as to create public enemies of the state is a time-tested tactic of the Soviet KGB. It is not unreasonable to ask, "Will the real Vladimir Putin step forward?"

On the other hand our Moscow bureau's growing relationship with the Ministry of Justice, and especially with Russia's human rights ombudsman, are genuine causes for optimism.

A new and disturbing trend that emerged in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks is the radicalization of some of Russia's Islamic community.

A few Russian Muslim leaders, most but not all of them self-proclaimed, publicly repeated the radical Islamist canard that Israel secretly planned the September 11 attacks. Rallies in support of the Taliban and the PLO have taken place in some predominantly Muslim regions.

So far such opinions are shared, we believe, by a small minority of Russian Muslims and are mostly concentrated in Chechnya and Daghestan. Yet this is obviously a growing trend that requires continuing monitoring.

Islamophobia remains widespread, reflected in the opposition by some regional authorities to the building of mosques and the tendency of much of the Russian press to equate Islam with terrorists without taking into account the diversity of the Islamic faith. Here local leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church, who in several cases have lobbied against the construction of mosques, are as complicit as when they distribute anti-Semitic literature like *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* in church bookstores.

Mr. Chairman, I think the essence of our report and its implication can be summarized in six points.

1. Anti-Semitism and anti-black xenophobia have risen dramatically in part as a consequence of 9/11. Anti-black discrimination is in part a by-product of the government's Chechnya-related propaganda.

2. President Putin has made unprecedented and exemplary statements committing his government to combating anti-Semitism, nationalism and extremism.

However, there has been government complicity, and passivity and acquiescence. For example, failure to investigate and prosecute, failure to hold anti-Semitic political leaders accountable.

As the saying goes, Putin is talking the talk, but not sufficiently walking the walk. Our report, we hope, will help him to do better.

3. The human rights ombudsman and his regional network is the most consistent national actor in training official attention and public attention on this important problem. Putin's direct and public support of Mr. Mironov's work would send a powerful and constructive message.

4. Anti-Semitism and xenophobia are crucial national security issues beyond the hate and intimidation aimed at specific targets. That they are allowed to flourish with impunity is a critical bellwether or indicator of the grave weakness of human rights, rule of law and civil society generally, especially the criminal justice system and the moral mood of the country. The failure to adequately confront these evils carries with it two kinds of dangerous consequences for Russia. First, it emboldens terrorists and nourishes the social fabric that tolerates them. This is both a domestic and international security threat because it raises the chance for terrorists and extremists to gain nuclear materials, for instance; arguably a greater threat to world peace than others. Second, the breakdown of human rights and civil society is both an undue burden on Russia's budget and economy and a profound disincentive to foreign trade and investment.

5. All of this suggests an evolving new paradigm for viewing the nexus between human rights and national security. The history of the human rights movement, which importantly developed in Russia, along with the Jewish national emigration movement, the *refuseniks*, began in the 1970s and was heavily influenced and promoted by the Helsinki Process.

The emphasis was placed on defending the individual against abuses of rights by the government. In this emphasis, although the issues of anti-Semitism and xenophobia were recognized evils, they were not seen as major priorities for human rights campaigners.

The events of the past year have demonstrated the need for a new paradigm, one that brings two issues up to parity with the traditional values of human rights: a) that anti-Semitism and xenophobia are central human rights abuses in their own right and as bell-

wethers, as well as predictors of escalating danger; and b) that governments and human rights activists alike must also focus beyond concern for governmental abuse of the individual to include concern for the dangers to society at large of non-state criminals and terrorists.

6. Accordingly, human rights monitoring of their behavior as it is performed by MHG and UCSJ, is the human rights national security analogue to arms inspection. The results should be taken seriously by policymakers and factored into all intelligence analyses and databases.

Let me repeat that President Bush has walked the walk in a distinguished manner. His September 2002 National Security Strategy is perhaps the foremost and most unprecedented examination of human rights as being integral to national security policy.

We call on him to see that his military, diplomatic, foreign aid, trade and intelligence agencies internalize these human rights values, which are at the heart of American values, into all international and bilateral affairs.

Specifically, we call to your attention our urging that OSCE hold a supplemental human dimension implementation meeting on anti-Semitism during 2003 to review and identify best practices for monitoring and reporting. In this, as in all other relevant issues, we commend the Helsinki Commission's action and moral leadership.

Finally, I think it is fair to say that no Russian leader can compare with President Putin in analyzing publicly the problems of extremism, anti-Semitism and civil society failures that must be overcome for Russia to flourish as a leading democratic country.

However, a country that allows extremists to flourish with impunity, bans the visits of religious leaders while inviting the likes of David Duke, registers Nazi political parties while discouraging more liberal parties and many human rights NGOs, has a long way to travel.

A leader who treats environmentalists as spies, is suspicious of a free press, and who supports anti-Semitic and anti-Americans at home and abroad, has much reforming to do, despite his cooperation against the most prominent terrorists.

We believe his most important next steps must be to strengthen Russia's criminal justice system so as to secure his country from the scourge of anti-Semitism and xenophobia and the risk of theft of nuclear materials by domestic and foreign terrorists.

This is a cause that the American government needs to assist in and the NGO human rights community needs to insist on. Unlike the confrontations of the Soviet era, we have much to collaborate upon.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. KURSCH. Thank you very much. I would like to thank all our presenters for their informative presentations, which I think are summaries of longer reports.

If I might use my prerogative here in chairing this meeting to ask a couple of questions that I know may be in these studies that I have not had a chance to look at yet.

Mr. NAFTALIN. Mr. Chairman, I do hope that my full statement could be in the record.

Mr. KURSCH. Absolutely.

What I heard from all of you is the question of the role of the courts and the great weaknesses in the judicial system in Russia today, particularly in dealing with these kinds of actions of extremism, skinheads, anti-Semitic violence, etc.

What I would like to ask, first, have there been successes where prosecutors have vigorously taken these cases on? If they have, how have they been publicized? Is there potential for giving publicity for best practices?

Secondly, I guess in a more general way, I would like to ask for your expert opinion on how does one get at this. This is an enormous task, the whole issue of trying to create a rule of law and respect for the law. How can the United States and other OSCE countries be helpful without intruding into the affairs of a sovereign state? It is always a very tricky business, but I would like to hear your thoughts.

Another element that I did not hear anybody allude to, but seems to me to be quite important, is the role of education. We talk about the emergence of skinheads. These are young people. What are young people being taught in Russia today in the school systems? How much of an effort is being placed by the government in educating a new generation of Russian citizens in tolerance, respect for diversity and these kinds of issues? Again, how much could others who have had some experience in these fields be of possible assistance?

Ms. ALEXEYEVVA [through translator]. So first, regarding the courts, in our country, criminal cases initiated against the perpetrators in hate crimes aimed at peoples of the Caucasus are extremely rare. Same goes for cases of hatred against the Roma. These matters are simply not taken to court nowadays.

As far as anti-Semitic crimes are concerned, the matter is of a different hue. But there is a whole story behind it. This story, again, is not a happy story at all. Because while criminal proceedings would be initiated against perpetrators in incitement to hatred against Jews, at the same time, those cases would rarely reach trial or it would not be proven at the hearing that indeed such a crime took place.

The judges in most cases would simply refuse to state that a particular anti-Semitic statement indeed represents incitement to ethnic hatred, no matter how blatant the statement is.

A very illustrative and infamous tell-tale case is that of General Makashov, a very aggressive nationalistic and anti-Semitic leader, who at a certain point called upon the population to beat Jews. A court of law considered the matter and did not come to a decision that appeals to beat members of an ethnic group actually represent, in this case, an anti-Semitic appeal.

Basically, every time judges would simply refer to the fact that the existing legislative base is not sufficient or is not detailed enough to allow them to prosecute the perpetrators in these crimes.

Several months ago, the law on countering extremist activities, which Tanya referred to, was passed. The purpose behind the law was supposedly to fill the gaps and to enable the law enforcement and the judicial system to punish the perpetrators in racist crimes.

Nothing like that has been happening so far with one exception, and this is something Tanya has already retold just as well. It was the situation in Krasnodar Region when a human rights organization was being threatened with the anti-extremism law for its activities aimed at protection of the Meskhetian Turks, the most persecuted ethnic minority in the region.

My opinion—and that is not my opinion alone—is that the root cause of the problem belongs with the fact that the law enforcement and the judicial structures are infiltrated with anti-Caucasian xenophobic and anti-Semitic views.

When the officials have such attitudes and feelings, it is—no matter what legislative remedy is available, no matter of how well the laws are written and how helpful they could be, the officials can always neglect them or use them to support the people they sympathize with and punish their opponents.



Also, the problem is not only with the law enforcement and the judicial community. It should be emphasized that while anti-Caucasian attitudes are pervasive with the population in general, anti-Semitism is something rather typical for the political elite.

Also, it should be noted in particular that anti-Semitic attitudes and anti-Western attitudes are closely intertwined. There are people that have negative feelings toward the Caucasians—when I am saying the Caucasians I, of course, mean the peoples of the Caucasus. Those people can be anti-Westerners at the same time, but that does not always come together.

But as far as anti-Semites are concerned, they are always at the same time anti-Westerners. There is this whole trend when the anti-Semitism and anti-Western feelings simply go together and cannot even be distinguished at a certain point..

All this phenomenon is reflected in our report, of course. Because of the union of anti-Semitism and anti-Westernism, I believe that the intention of President Putin to make Russia part of the Western democratic community is not being received in a friendly manner by the political leadership of the Russian Federation, which itself is contaminated with anti-Semitism and anti-Westernism.

As concerns your second question, the issue of skinheads is rather complicated. As many experts and researchers have noted, skinheads are not quite ideologues or they represent a rather amorphous aggressive mass. They act violently. They attack aliens, strangers in general. They are not specifically anti-Semitic or specifically anti-Caucasian. They are against all the different groups that exist.

Also it is particularly dangerous that in the past at least, the skinheads have been in Russia for quite a while. In the past, among skinheads, there were mostly young people of very poor social background. Now, on the other hand, some youth from the relatively intellectual and educated circles are also joining in.

It is, of course, very threatening that some ultra-radical political parties whose ideology is based on nationalism and anti-Semitism are trying to tame the skinheads and to include skinheads in their ranks. It is hard to estimate how successful their efforts are, especially due to the fact that skinheads are very difficult to reign in.

But this trend does exist.

This is very threatening because if they succeed in their attempts and if these ultra-radical parties manage to tame skinheads, they would then represent quite a significant force. Nowadays, such parties there, they are quite aggressive, but they are not numerous at all.

The skinheads, on the other hand, are quite big in number. From that point of view, if skinheads are really drawn into their ranks, the ultra-radical parties will become much stronger.

Also, the skinhead subculture is quite contagious, and the movement is expanding. It has been spread to most of the large cities in Russia. It was almost nonexistent a while ago, and now it has become so big. This is something that the state is not able to fight. This is the movement that is continuously spreading.

It causes particular concern that the law enforcement sympathizes with the skinheads. During the pogroms in Moscow, which for example, were mentioned here, the police were actually doing everything so as not to have the skinheads face justice. There are quite many people in the law enforcement that support the nationalistic ideas, for whom skinheads, I would say, are closer than any given national minority.

Just to illustrate the situation and the law enforcement, there was a relatively recent survey when people in Russia were asked whom they are more afraid of—the bandits or the police. Seventy percent of the respondents said explicitly that they were afraid of the police more than they were afraid of the bandits.

The police are becoming ever more corrupt and ever more part of the criminal world. Of course their possibilities are quite significant, because of their official status and mandate.

Mr. NAFTALIN. Well, in a way, it is easy to answer your question because Ludmilla has answered, and I agree with just about every word she says. It is all in our report as well.

Let me make a couple of points. I would like to first emphasize one of her later points. That is when we talk about the importance of anti-Semitism as a bellwether or as a predictor of trouble, it is not only that we are talking about the specific threat to Jews. I think in a much broader sense, it is because anti-Semitism is really the universal language of hatred.

It is not limited to Jews, the skinheads are neo-Nazis and they wear the Nazi insignias and they spout anti-Jewish slogans. It does not matter whether they are attacking Jews or they are attacking blacks or they are attacking a U.S. Marine guarding a Congressman's wife in Moscow, or a foreign student, it does not matter. The language remains anti-Semitic and go beyond the skinheads the language of anti-Semitism is essentially the same language as the language against America and the West in general.

It is becoming, and we are starting to see trends that relate to not only America specifically but the whole globalization effort is being infected by some of this behavior and some of this rhetoric.

I was surprised, really, to note in the interview in the newspaper that I quoted in my full statement that one of those skinhead pogroms that involved a mainstream youth leader who was also a skinhead, their original target was an anti-globalization rally in Moscow that did not materialize.

So there they were, ready to go after anti-globalists, who didn't show up, so they went after a market instead. Now that doesn't mean they are leaving markets alone otherwise, they go after markets anyway.

Nevertheless, the point is that there is some suggestion that some of these forces are coalescing. One can certainly see that at the Durban Conference when many of those who were involved in the anti-Israel resolution when the Durban Conference was over came to Washington to protest the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

They did not see much difference between being against Israel, being against America, being against the World Bank. It is all the same rhetoric in a way. Some of the same people.

So it is an important trend to be watching and anti-Semitism is one of the tell-tales of looking for, it is the smoke that helps you know that there is fire.

We know of no serious, major example of prosecution for hate crimes. There are occasional prosecutions but the list of anti-Semitic and xenophobic hate crimes that go undetected, uninvestigated, unprosecuted, etc., are legion.

There are individual cases. I think, and that goes particularly for the violent cases, the cases of publications are a little easier to watch because it is a little easier to catch somebody, they publish obviously.

So there, instead of categorically refusing to prosecute, they either downgrade, they downgrade violent crimes to hooliganism, they downgrade clear-cut anti-Semitic publication as an example to the judges.

If they get tried at all the judges send the literature to some favorite expert who will say that even in such books as *Mein Kampf* or the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* they see no anti-Semitism in those, find them OK even though they are clear violations of criminal law.

I think that the point about anti-Semites and haters infecting the criminal justice system or the police, the prosecutors, is absolutely right. But there are other problems as well.

The police aren't paid well. They are not well-trained, they are not professional, they are not taught very modern techniques for investigation, they do not have good equipment for investigation, they rely on torture to get confessions, make it easier for them to clear their cases.

If the whole NGO community is anxious to work with the police and the prosecutors to educate them about hate crimes, one of our groups has a superb program in northern Russia working with police, bringing together police from the Hate Crimes Unit in the San Francisco Police Department to work with the Russians—that's our Bay Area Council, the Harold Light Center in St. Petersburg.

There are many programs of that sort that need to be done. Every NGO I know of has proposals out to work on those issues, and also to work with school systems curricula on human rights.

All of these, including the ombudsman, have that on their agenda as well. We are always looking for ways to cooperate, but the problem is immense and it has to start with the central government, particularly in some of these terrible regions like Krasnodar.

The central government has to have a policy of not tolerating this kind of behavior on the part of officials. People need to be fired for their hate rhetoric and their anti-Semitic rhetoric, for their anti-black rhetoric, whatever it is.

They have to be fired for going into—having, you know, alliances with skinhead groups, or you know, Nazi groups, skinhead groups or neo-Nazi groups or Cossacks. As we have said in the past, and to some extent we are getting a little bit of cooperation. This report is organized by regions, both of our reports are. They become a road map for the authorities to go after these issues if they really want to work hard on them. That is what is needed.

Mr. KURSCH. Ms. Lokshina?

Ms. LOKSHINA. Well, I would just utter a few words. The key concept here is of course impunity. The state has been dallying with nationalistic attitudes and nationalistic ideas for a long time. By now the situation has just gotten out of control and the state is unable to deal with the consequences. For example, there is no denying that the state is trying to solve the skinhead problem. But apparently it seems to be too late, because the police cannot efficiently deal with the skinheads; the police operations are not well enough organized.

Also, it has been happening for years. The police ranks are infiltrated with xenophobic ideas. Same goes for impunity as far as courts are concerned; judges are simply way too fearful to sentence for such things as incitement to hatred. Because what exactly is incitement and how far can you go? Or, in the worst cases, judges themselves sympathize with nationalists and openly humiliate representatives of ethnic minorities during trial.

There have been many suggestions as to how to improve the existing criminal legislation. For example, having the Article 282 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation that is the one involving incitement to ethnical and religion hatred, split into two different articles with one having to do with aggressive acts and attacks relevant to incitement of ethnic hatred and the other one basically having to do with hate speech. That could have been a solution in a sense. For judges it would have been easier to condemn for actual attacks for violence on ethnic grounds and hate speech would have been dealt with in a different manner, with the sanctions limited to fines or administration short-term detentions.

Regarding the law on countering extremist activities, it is another story, really, because for a number of months, experts from the civil society were renegotiating with the State Duma, and the Lower House of the Parliament, trying to prove that the existing draft-law had lots of drawbacks that could be counter-productive to say the least.

The feedback they would be getting from the State Duma Committee on Legislation, for example, from the head of the State Duma committee on legislation, from different officials within the President's administration was actually quite positive, meaning that they were told that our people in the Parliament and people in the President's administration—and I should emphasize again that the draft-law that finally passed was the one sponsored by the President, understood all the existing drawbacks, agreed with the opinion of the experts and acknowledged that some provisions are too vague and just should not be there.

For example, there was a very strange situation in connection with religious organizations because for religious organizations just like for other organizations, propaganda of their own superiority was qualified as extremism.

If you think about your religious group, if we think about any church at all, including of course the Russian Orthodox Church, propaganda of its own superiority is simply inevitable.

The people of the present administration, the people in the Parliament basically said, "Do not worry. In the final reading, all of the problems are going to be eliminated from the draft." That was the unanimous message.

In the final reading, the amendments that were indeed made, but they made the final version even worse and more dangerous than the former draft. That is typical of the whole process of negotiation, of current negotiations between the state and the civil society.

The state is coming forth with promises. The state, until the last moment, had listened—and I am sure that Ms. Alexeyva would agree with me in this respect—the state always says, "We understand. We share your opinion. You are perfectly correct in making such recommendations. Do not worry. Everything is going to be fine in the final reading of the draft law." And the final reading comes. All of the promises kind of disappear into thin air.

This happened in connection with the draft law on alternative civil service, which is a primary concern for the Russian civil society. Also the law on citizenship—

Mr. KURSCH. Citizenship?

Ms. LOKSHINA.—and the amendments into the law on foreign citizens, which are discriminatory in nature. There have been negotiations between the legislatures and the executive branch in the civil society. The negotiations seem to be quite successful, and nothing happened.

It is also important to note, I think, that now the officials are learning, with exception at some regions—the south of Russia—the officials do come to an understanding that blatant hate speech statements in connection with national minorities is not a done thing.

They understand it slowly, but gradually. But what they do in exchange, they repeat the same things referring not to ethnic minorities, but to migrants, implying that migrants are indeed not just migrants, but ethnic migrants.

So whatever you are not supposed to be saying about ethnic minorities because Russia is now living in a state of tolerance, you can easily say about migrants and you are still going to remain with the circle of tolerance paradigm, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the population that is very much oriented against migration is going to fully support you. So that is another side of the coin.

Finally, as concerns education, there is—[crosstalk]—the Russian Federation federal program on formation of the Basics of Tolerant Consciousness in the Russian Society—a very difficult name.

The program that was recently passed has different parts to it, different stages. It is a five-year program, and now we are going through the so-called first expert research stage. All the program's curriculum and the methodologies on teaching tolerance have to be developed.

So far, I really have seen not much progress in this respect, to say the least.

Also, officially, NGOs are invited to participate as experts in the development of such curriculum and methodologies. However, when a tender for participation was held, most expert NGOs only found out about it as well as the application procedure post-factum.

At the same time, myself, I am a member of something like an expert NGO council affiliated with the Ministry of Education. For some reason, we, the member of this body, are not even getting accurate information from the ministry.

That is a very disturbing trend in itself. Also, as far as I understand, the educational programs developed within this federal effort are going to target schools, as opposed to state officials. That is also very important, as tolerance education has to start in schools. Now the problem is: who are going to be the teachers and how the teachers are going to be taught?

The point that I am trying to make is that, unless NGOs that work in this field—they have the exercise; they have been doing it for years—are involved in this process, are involved in training of teachers, are involved in development of curriculum within the framework of this tolerance education, nothing productive is going to come out of it.

Thank you.

Mr. KURSCH. Dr. Stonov?

Dr. STONOV. Yes, I would like two minutes to add a point relative to the drive to graduate Russia from the strictures of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment. UCSJ was one of the earliest supporters of the JV and, more generally, of linking human rights and trade. Last year, with U.S. Embassy support, we held a conference in Krasnodar on the theme of anti-Semitism and xenophobia as providing disincentives to economic development, trade and foreign investment in Russia. Human rights monitors, business people and local officials discussed the issue and made a first attempt to develop human rights measures or criteria that could help business leaders rate the likely effectiveness and security of their potential investments. UCSJ is presently weighing the possibility of encouraging a coalition of human rights and business leaders that would develop constructive “carrots” as distinguished from the coercive Soviet-era Jackson-Vanik “stick” to promote human rights reform. I think this approach could be very helpful.

Second, about legislation, there is absolutely quite enough legislation, and there was quite enough—[crosstalk]—when it was article number 74. Last year, we visited the Moscow prosecutor's office. We have the impression that there is a specific decision, a special order not to open the cases on the article about hate crime cases, but they ... [Inaudible.] And it is very difficult to prove, because ... [Inaudible.]

I think we need to have a pressured government to open the special cases because as is said in our book and Moscow [inaudible], very, [inaudible] as it is now in Russia.

Thank you.

Mr. KURSCH. Thank you.

Mr. NAFTALIN. Let me also just add a real concern is first of all the non-governmental agency most interested getting into the schools is the Russian Orthodox Church. That is not good news for Christians or Jews or anybody else.

Dr. STONOV. A lot of books are published by Russian Orthodox Church and spread through Russian Orthodox Church special shops for books.

Mr. NAFTALIN. And Muslims as well, but Muslims probably serve as a greater enemy to the Church than the Jews and probably the Christians, so-called totalitarian sects; evangelical Christian groups are number one enemy to the Church because I guess they are the most competitive.

Ms. ALEXEYeva [through translator]. Somehow, the Russian Orthodox Church and the way it carries on is a bit reminiscent of the way skinheads are carrying on, because just like the skinheads, the Russian Orthodox Church is opposing everything alien, is basically opposing to everything that is not itself. Of course, it is not nice at all, and it does not feel good to compare our clerics with the skinhead youths. At the same time, that's how the situation stands.

Ms. LOKSHINA. Getting back to your question, I will have my final say about how the United States can intervene and how the United States can help. This is a very tricky business of course, and we understand that the issues are very related to the sovereignty principal.

At the same time, it is an obligation of Russia as a state member of quite a number of international treaties to promote human rights, not only tolerance, but to promote human rights in general, to promote the very treaties, the very agreements that Russia is a member of.

Very recently we had a meeting with the so-called Penalty Execution Department, because the Moscow Helsinki Group is soon launching an effort aimed at monitoring the situation of prisoners in Russia. At that meeting their representative explicitly told me that nothing much can be expected from the different officials on location simply because they really have no clue about what minimal standards of treatment of prisoners are and what kind of standards are there at all and what kind of obligations Russia has undertaken in this connection or in any other connection for that matter. They have never read or been taught the European Convention on Human Rights, they have never heard of the ICCPR, not to mention the minimal standards, of course.

The representative of this official structure under the Ministry of Justice actually asked me whether the Moscow Helsinki Group could possibly get some books for him to deliver to the people he supervises over in the provinces. Of course I will do my best to help, trying again to use the assets of different Western sponsors as such is the case.

But it is the obligation of the Russian state to make these materials available. It is the direct obligation of the Russian state to provide such information to its own officials.

That's something that's not being done, and maybe that's something that can be raised with the Russian authorities, and to which the Russian state cannot possibly object, the promotion of human rights.

Mr. KURSCH. Thank you very much.

Are there any comments from our other—from those who've been with us? Are there additional questions, things we have missed? I think we are getting close to the end of our time here.

I do want to thank you for coming and sharing your information with us and all this enormous research that has been carried out. I also would like to praise our witnesses for their bravery and persistence, particularly the people who have lived in Russia all these years. We do see the emergence of a very vigorous group of NGOs, there certainly is a long tradition of courage and persistence in your country. In fact I think if there's something that we in America might learn from Russia it is not to be so impatient. We are impatient and we like immediate results.

I think that the persistence that you show is a major asset in bringing real, true democracy and civil society to Russia. Clearly in the United States we want to be seen as an ally in this process, but not as an institution that wants to Americanize Russia, that's not realistic nor desirable. We have an opportunity for partnership, serious partnership.

When we think of the real threats to our national security and the way of life that we wish to maintain in both our countries, neither of us exactly threaten one another, rather the threat is from questions such as environmental degradation, international terrorism. We think of these very serious global issues that we need to work on together.

I was happy to hear some encouraging signs, and I can say that my glass is a little bit full, in terms of the leadership that the President of the Russian Federation has shown in some high-profile instances, which I think we should not dismiss. This is a very, very welcome change.

You mentioned the institution of ombudsman that has been functioning successfully, and also the vigorousness of NGOs. I was very happy to learn about exchanges that are taking place between NGOs in the United States, bringing police organizations together.

Even if these developments are small, as we say in America, drops in the bucket, I think it is very, very important that we learn more about this and what's going on because good example is so important to encourage better behavior.

I would say that one should continue to be patient and continue to be pushing in the right direction. I remember my first visit to Washington, D.C., was in 1956, and when we drove from New York to Washington with my parents it was the first time I had really directly encountered segregation—white-only restaurants—and I'd never seen this before. And, of course, when one went further south it got much worse. I also remember and was here when Dr. King made his speech on the mall in 1963.

I'd like to think we have come a long way since then, but I wouldn't say that we have resolved all our problems. It is a continuing and constant effort.

So thank you very much.

A final comment. Yes, please?

Mr. NAFTALIN. I wanted to make one point. I think that we, contrary to the period of the Soviet Union when the Helsinki process was at its height and when the bilateral relationships with the Soviet Union at that time involved aggressive work negotiating on human rights issues, I think that's largely missing.

These issues are not integrated in the day-to-day agenda building of the bilateral relationship with Russia, and these issues that we have talked about in terms of promoting cooperation and promoting improvement in the civil society are very poorly prioritized in terms of our foreign aid program. I think we do not—I do not think we—just as we have said that Putin’s rhetoric is far greater than the action, I think to some extent that’s true here, too, that our government’s rhetoric is much greater than its negotiating strategy or its foreign aid priorities.

Ms. ALEXEYEVA [through translator]. I would like to say in the end a few things that I should have definitely said at the start of this meeting.

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to the Helsinki Commission for its strong stand and for its persistent cooperation with the Moscow Helsinki Group from the very moment of the Commission’s creation.

This cooperation, I hope, will continue on and on into the ages. I would like to extend my warm feelings and gratitude to our colleagues from the Union of Councils for Soviet Jewry with whom we have been cooperating for, probably, almost as many years as with the Helsinki Commission and whose persistence, whose courageous work in the region, whose work in Russia has been there for so many years and has been so impressive and so very helpful to the Russian civil society, to Russia as a country, and to the Moscow Helsinki Group in particular.

Mr. KURSCH. Thank you all very much, and we will with your help we will try to keep this, these issues on the national agenda. The biggest challenge is how do you keep these issues on the agenda when there are so many things to be concerned about.

We greatly appreciate your help.

[Whereupon the briefing was concluded at 11:20 a.m.]



## APPENDICES

### PREPARED STATEMENT OF TANYA LOKSHINA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MOSCOW HELSINKI GROUP

In 2001-2002, the Moscow Helsinki Group monitored the manifestations of nationalism, xenophobia, and intolerance in the Russian Federation and came to the conclusion that a whole series of severe problems exist in these areas today. The Russian authorities in their public rhetoric claim an adherence to the principles of tolerance and equality. They also claim that they are striving to have a dialogue with groups of ethnic and religious minorities. The authorities insist that various nations and cultures in the country live in peace and harmony and that the struggle with political extremism, xenophobia, and intolerance is at the center of attention for President Putin, the Government, and the law enforcement agencies.

However, we assert that during the last several years a menacing growth in xenophobia and nationalist moods took place in Russian society. Such negative views as Chechenophobia, Caucasophobia, Romaphobia, and a general intolerance towards ethnic migrants and religious minorities intensified.

The authorities persistently refer to a lack of violence on racial/ethnic grounds as an indicator of the harmony in inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations. However, the events in 2001-2002 completely refute these claims. Russia is experiencing an unprecedented amount of crime based on racial and ethnic hatred. Moreover, clashes between representatives of various ethnic groups (the last clash took place in Krasnoarmeisk in the Moscow region where a conflict broke out between Russians and Armenians living there) and attacks on racial grounds by so-called skinheads are taking place. The latter phenomenon is becoming particularly dangerous. In 2001 in Moscow, two pogroms took place, the second one, which occurred at the end of October, being particularly outrageous, as up to 300 skinheads participated and there was a loss of life.

Despite what these events themselves say, law enforcement agencies refuse to acknowledge the growth of violent crimes carried out on racial grounds. In the overwhelming majority of cases, either the criminals remain unpunished or the investigative and judicial agencies ignore the racist component of the act. Until recently, the authorities in fact did not take into account the growth of the activity of extreme youth groups. Due to their inaction, in particular, there were riots in the center of Moscow in June 2002. The riots were organized by football fans, and the skinheads in the group were particularly active. During the riots, crimes on racial grounds also took place.

The situation in Moscow and in the Moscow region—places which attract a considerable part of the migration flows—is significant but not unique. An analogous situation has developed in the majority of large cities in the European part of the country and in the Ural region. In a number of regions, particularly in the south of Russia, regional authorities themselves serve as spreaders of racist and xenophobic moods, patronize nationalistic groups, and promote intolerance in society. The situation in the Krasnodar territory, where the aggressive nationalist rhetoric of the authorities is combined with openly discriminatory policies and practices, is completely unacceptable. Moreover, the Krasnodar Governor, A. Tkachev, maintains that the region's ethnic policy is completely supported by the federal authorities and personally by the President, and neither the federal authorities nor the President even try to disclaim this.

We maintain that, despite the declaration about the unacceptability of nationalism in all forms and public gestures, the federal authorities are not taking effective measures to stop the discriminatory practices in the regions. We call upon the state members of the OSCE to turn to the Russian authorities with the following recommendations regarding the protection of minorities and the establishment of a climate of tolerance in the country:

- High-ranking state officials must energetically come forward with condemnations of specific displays of nationalism and xenophobia, especially those displays that are aggressive.
- Nationalist propaganda, especially propaganda coming from officials at all levels, must be effectively stopped.
- Law enforcement and other state agencies must stop discriminatory practices with respect to the Chechens, Kurds, Meskhetin Turks, Roma and other vulnerable ethnic groups.
- The Russian Federation must develop cooperation with regional and international agencies (treaty bodies and other) in order to struggle against racism, xenophobia, discrimination, and intolerance, and in order to expand the use of the appropriate international human rights mechanisms that offer preventive measures and aim at eliminating racism, xenophobia, discrimination, and intolerance.
- The introduction of educational programs that focus on the dangers of racism, nationalism, and xenophobia and that foster a respectful attitude towards cultural diversity in officials, especially in police officials, judges, and law enforcers, is necessary in Russia.

**PREPARED STATEMENT OF MICAH NAFTALIN,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF UCSJ: THE UNION OF COUNCILS FOR JEWS IN  
THE FORMER SOVIET UNION**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Commission:

On behalf of Yossi Abramowitz, president of UCSJ, and our entire board—and indeed our entire international movement—I thank you for this important opportunity to talk about anti-semitism and xenophobia in the Russian regions and, more important, I believe, to talk about the direct relevance this subject has to the broader dimensions of policies that address no less than war and peace as a result of September 11.

I am joined by Dr. Leonid Stonov, a former Moscow Refusenik leader and member of the Moscow Helsinki Group, who now works out of our affiliate, Chicago Action for Jews in the Former Soviet Union, and directs and coordinates UCSJ's human rights bureaus across the former Soviet Union (FSU); and Nikolai Butkevich, UCSJ's research and advocacy director, who is the general editor of the report we are issuing today—*Anti-Semitism, Xenophobia and Religious Persecution in Russia's Regions—2001*.

I am honored to share this opportunity with Ludmilla Alexeeva, the chairman of Russia's oldest and most prestigious human rights organization, the Moscow Helsinki Group and president of the International Helsinki Federation. UCSJ and MHG have been partners since the 1970s—sometimes informally and, more recently, through our joint efforts in human rights monitoring across the Russian Federation under the auspices of a vitally influential pilot grant of NED and a major four-year grant from USAID, to which UCSJ was the sub-grantee. That effort has resulted in the establishment of a truly integrated human rights movement for the first time in Russian history.

Mr. Chairman, I recognize the difficulty of gaining the attention of the public or of policymakers to this subject at a time when questions of international terrorism, of weapons inspection, indeed of war and peace and America's obligations to protect and defend democracy are the riveting issues of the day. But isn't this precisely one of the crucial byproducts of September 11—that we are now able to tune into the signals that were always out there? It is my hope to assert a new paradigm of human rights and national security: xenophobia, of which anti-semitism is a central component, represents the opposite side of the same coin as extremism and terrorism and, as such, needs to be ranked as a major category of human rights violations. Moreover, monitoring strategies to combat it are available, as our report demonstrates, and, in light of September 11, they must now rank with weapons inspections in our national security arsenal. The collective failure of the NGO and intelligence communities to adequately address these connections was one element of the colossal failure of imagination that has permitted the success of extremism and terrorism in the Middle East, in Russia, and at the World Trade Center and Pentagon. Raging racism demonstrates a dangerous breakdown of rule of law that threatens Russia's economic and political stability and vulnerability to extremism and terrorism. It calls out for American vigilance and assistance.

The intelligence, diplomatic, foreign aid and human rights communities must all take this insight as a mandate for action. And because the Helsinki Process is the natural father of this paradigm, what better venue to explore its implications than this Helsinki Commission? Throughout the Cold War and up to today, your commission, Mr. Chairman, has been the principal venue to keep front and center the crucial nexus between human rights and national security.

Our report is based on the year-long monitoring throughout 2001 by UCSJ's Moscow "Bureau on Human Rights," whose director is Alexandr Brod. The heart of the work is the presentation of 250 pages of detailed reports of incidents in 63 of Russia's 89 regions. While most of the report comprises the reports of UCSJ's network of monitors and media articles, a new feature can be found in many regional chapters that contain mini-reports on local conditions from our monitors in their own words. No summary can adequately convey the abject and cumulative horror one finds by reading the hundreds of incidents of hate crimes and hate speech described in this report, page by page, region by region. But beyond the human tragedy, this is a document of a failed criminal justice system that it is in both Russia's and America's interest to repair.

The report also documents certain improvements, including President Putin's unprecedented support of the Jewish community and his calls to combat anti-semitism. But it also documents the increase in xenophobia aimed primarily at citizens, mostly Muslim, from the Caucasus. Without question, "anti-semitism and xenophobia have increased in the past year, and they have a strong correlation with anti-democratic and anti-market sentiments, as well as a level of ethnic Russian nationalism that may imperil the still fragile, multi-ethnic structure of the Russian Federation."

This report, and the very capability to produce it, carries policy implications for President Bush and President Putin as they strive to combat international and domestic terrorism. First and foremost, in addition to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, we must never again forget that "words and behavior also matter." The very length of our report is but a palpable reminder that racists do not pursue their murderous goals by stealth. They pursue conquest through intimidation. They announce their intentions in advance. They thus can be interdicted through effective monitoring and the holding of their host governments accountable for their actions.

This truth applies equally to Hitlerian dictators, totalitarian hegemony, and draconian terrorists. Recall that Mein Kampf promised World War II and the Holocaust; the Doctor's Plot and the anti-Zionist committee foreshadowed Stalin's purges; bin Laden's earlier fatwa against Jews and America predicted September 11; the antisemitic and anti-Israel propaganda, official newspaper editorials and cartoons and school curricula of the Palestinian Authority and many Arab countries gave the lie to their intentions for the Oslo peace process; and the anti-Jewish pogromist threats from the floor of the Russian Duma in the late 1990s signaled the build-up of antisemitic and xenophobic invective and violence leading to today's rampaging gangs of neo-Nazi skinheads.

But their audacity and impunity are also their weakness if we but learn to take them seriously because, unlike the difficulties of inspections and seeking well concealed weapons, extremists are more often easily identified and monitored and they depend on the acquiescence, if not collaboration, of their host governments.

I am optimistic in making these observations because I believe our government has never been as well positioned to make human rights an integral element of national security policy as it is today. The superb efforts of those in the Department of State who produce annual country reports on human rights and religious persecution, worldwide, have never been stronger. And their success owes much to their demonstrated ability to receive and utilize monitoring reports like ours from the entire human rights community. And make no mistake, the international community reads and is influenced by these reports.

What's new and quite remarkable, however, is the "National Security Strategy" document issued by the President in September. I believe this document is unprecedented in

the extent and priority it places on human rights and American values. In the national debate today, one would gather that this document is all but a declaration of war. But the very first paragraph states, "In the twenty-first century, only nations that share a commitment to protecting basic human rights and guaranteeing political and economic freedom will be able to unleash the potential of their people and assure their future prosperity." And in Part II, before the sections about combating terrorism, the strategy asserts: "America must stand firmly for the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity: the rule of law; limits on the absolute power of the state; free speech; freedom of worship; equal justice; respect for women; religious and ethnic tolerance; and respect for private property."

With respect, may I only quibble with one of the President's words. With respect to the Russian Federation, other states of the former Soviet Union, and non-democratic nations elsewhere, while we may hope that these values are "nonnegotiable," it is incumbent on America and the human rights community, indeed to negotiate for and demand these rights. And, in the case of Russia, the President could not have appointed an ambassador better equipped for such a challenge than Alexander Vershbow. And, in this vein, may I also note that President Putin is also well served in such pursuits by the exemplary efforts of Russia's Human Rights Ombudsman, Professor Oleg Mironov, who last Friday joined with our Moscow Bureau director, Alexander Brod, in publicly signing a formal agreement of cooperation in furtherance of human rights and combating anti-semitism and xenophobia generally.

Mr. Mironov stated at the press conference that: "One of the sharpest problems of Russian society is the increase in political extremism, and social, racial, ethnic and religious hostility. The spread of fascist ideas and terrorism present a threat to the constitutional system, human rights and freedoms. Unfortunately, law enforcement agencies very often qualify antisemitic and nationalistic incidents as hooliganism or ordinary quarrels."

Russia's internal security is important to us for many reasons, some that tend to be overlooked in today's debates. Russia remains a vast and important nuclear power with widespread influence, whose leader shows some limited inclinations to moving toward democracy and who has unquestionably cast his lot with America in the war on terrorism. But because of the rise in domestic terrorism, and the weaknesses in its institutions for securing rule of law, Russia's vast and tenuously guarded stockpile of the materials and components of nuclear weaponry make it a major target for countries and terrorists alike who would hope to purchase or steal nuclear capabilities for mass destruction. Our report documents one dimension of Russia's, and therefore America's vulnerability.

We cannot say with scientific accuracy that the 30 percent increase in the size of our report compared to last year's version proves a 30 percent increase in the absolute number of incidents. The strengthening and broadening of our monitoring network across Russia in the past year may be a partial explanation. Unquestionably, however, the problem is becoming more dangerous, one factor being the qualitative and quantitative increase in the strength and viciousness of the neo-Nazi skinheads; another, the pro-bin Laden and heightened anti-Jewish, anti-Israel and anti-America rhetoric of some Russian Muslim leaders since the terrorist attack of September 11. An apt summary of our report's findings is cited in a quotation that introduces our Executive Summary by no less an authority than Izvestiya "Hatred exists everywhere, but there are few places where the assortment of hatred is as broad as it is in our country. There are few places where society is so indifferent to it. In Germany each skinhead attack on Turks, Kurds or Jews becomes a matter of great alarm for the police and thousands-strong public demonstrations against

extremism and xenophobia. In our country such things do not provoke a very notable reaction, but what is noticeable are the consequences.”

Among many responses to such extremism, Russian President Vladimir Putin declared, on July 25 of this year, “if we allow the development of this bacillus of chauvinism, or nationalist or religious intolerance, we will destroy the country.” Despite the excellent rhetoric, governmental response has been minimal, many regional authorities openly collaborate with neo-Nazis; perpetrators of hate crimes, therefore, essentially behave with impunity.

As our report finds:

“From Kaliningrad in the far west to the Pacific port city of Vladivostok, from the Arctic city of Murmansk to the southern resort area of Krasnodar, regional authorities as a general rule ignore the activities of dangerous hate groups who aim violent rhetoric and actions against minority groups, refusing to prosecute hate crimes or, at best, classifying them under the euphemistic term “hooliganism.” These hate groups range from largely unorganized skinhead gangs to more structured neo-Nazi groups like the People’s National Party or the successors of Russian National Unity to officially approved paramilitary Cossack formations..While there have been improvements in the reactions of the authorities to antisemitic incidents as compared to previous years, official reaction is still disturbingly weak. Worst of all, after a welcome decline in antisemitic incidents in 2000, the summer and early fall of 2001 witnessed a rash of beatings of Jews (Moscow, Orenburg, Kostroma and Omsk) and arson attacks on Jewish property (Ryazan, Kostroma, Kazan), none of which have been solved. Nor have the vast majority of past antisemitic attacks-the synagogue bombings in Moscow in 1999, the attack on a Jewish school in Ryazan in 2000, and numerous other incidents-resulted in any convictions.”

President Putin continues to make positive gestures towards Russia’s Jewish community, attending major Jewish events, praising the positive role of Jews in Russia’s history and contemporary life, and strongly condemning anti-semitism. This has helped create a more confident climate for Jews in Russia, spurring a continued renaissance of Jewish life in Russia, as witnessed by the growing number of synagogues being returned to the community after decades of government ownership, the increasing coverage in the media of Jewish communal activities and statements by Jewish leaders about domestic and international events, and a rising willingness of Jewish leaders in some parts of the country to stand up publicly for their rights.

However, under the veneer of stability and justifiable celebration of the amazing achievements of the past decade, there remains a sense of unease. Jewish leaders’ constant assertions that “there is no state anti-semitism in Russia” are only partially correct. While it is certainly true that the active promotion of anti-semitism is no longer state policy, as it was throughout much of the Soviet period, passive state anti-semitism persists. While there has been some slight improvement in the enforcement by federal prosecutors of laws against the incitement of ethnic hatred, as a rule they fail to properly apply these laws, or ensure that regional prosecutors do, sending a message to antisemites that their actions will likely go unpunished. Far too much latitude has been granted to

regional officials in how they react to the activities of hate groups or extremist politicians, leaving many to choose to take no action at all to protect local minorities. In a November 2001 meeting with regional police officials, Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs Aleksandr Chekalin admitted as much when he stated: "We have gone too far in our inaction against extremist youth."

The consequences of this permissive attitude towards hate groups are especially clear in Moscow, where for years police have ignored skinhead attacks against foreign students, dark-skinned market traders, and even diplomats from African and Asian countries. Only now, when the problem has become so acute that skinhead violence is an almost daily event in Moscow, have the city authorities begun to take the skinhead problem seriously. Unfortunately, it may be too late to contain the growth of skinhead groups, who have increased their membership and geographical scope to a stunning degree.. Aleksandr Verkhovsky of the "Panorama" think tank-a leading authority on extremist groups in Russia-put the problem succinctly: "Extremist pro-Nazi paramilitary organizations propagandizing the ideas of racial hatred operate openly in Russia, and the state does nothing to prevent this."

This trend of passive state anti-semitism and racism is even more apparent in the judicial branch, where there are numerous examples of judges refusing to punish antisemites and other extremists, even when they have clearly violated the law. While the justice system tends to come down hard on even minor offenses, antisemitic and racist violence is often treated with kid gloves.

The State Duma remains a hotbed of anti-semitism and racism, especially among deputies from the KPRF and the LDPR. State Duma deputies from Bryansk and Krasnodar Krai regularly violate laws against public hate speech, as does Deputy Speaker of the State Duma Vladimir Zhirinovskiy. In 2001, hate literature was openly sold in the State Duma, including David Duke's "The Jewish Question Through the Eyes of an American" and several antisemitic newspapers.

On the regional level, President Putin has made some impressive progress in his efforts to reverse years of radical decentralization under the Yeltsin administration. Many regional laws have been brought into accord with federal legislation, secessionist movements that threatened the integrity of the Russian Federation have been successfully undercut (with the obvious exception of Chechnya), significant sources of revenue have been redirected from the regions to the center, and the central government has achieved the right to remove governors who go too far in abusing the law. However, despite the appearance of strength, the central government remains weak, and this weakness, when combined with the indifference of many central government officials to the problems of anti-semitism, racism, religious persecution and other human rights violations, has helped create a system of government in which regional leaders make some basic concessions to the Kremlin in return for the right to treat their citizens almost any way they choose. As a result, minority groups are treated differently from region to region, largely at the whim of the local bosses.

The Jewish community is a case in point: In a few extreme cases they are demonized by regional leaders (Kursk, Krasnodar) or by media controlled by the regional administration (Vladimir, Oryol, Bryansk), in a few more their concerns are taken very seriously (the Moscow city administration being the most obvious and important example), while in the bulk of Russia's regions, the authorities neither attack nor adequately defend Jews against grassroots antisemitic violence. In a prime example of collaboration between hate groups and regional authorities, in at least three regions (Ryazan, Voronezh, Tver), a successor

organization to the RNU (Russian Rebirth) was officially registered in 2001—two years after the RNU was banned in Moscow. In addition, the manner in which President Putin is tackling the problem of the central government's weakness shows an alarming tendency on his part to focus more on the levers of power than on the rule of law. Jews and all other citizens of Russia will never be truly safe until a democratic, law-based system develops, yet Russia under Putin seems to be sliding more and more towards authoritarianism

In recent weeks, and so not covered in our report, two related allegations of impropriety by the Kremlin raise a certain cognitive dissonance when compared to President Putin's public exhortations against extremism and anti-semitism. These improprieties lend credence to our concern that the president's rhetoric is far from matched by action. First, the Ministry of Justice has approved quite expeditiously the registration of a new political party—the National Power Party (NDPR)—whose leaders are recognized neo-Nazis and whose web site is explicitly antisemitic. In the second case, according to the September 23 report in *Novaya Gazeta*, while it is well known that Putin's political party, "Unity" has created a youth organization called "Walking Together," the paper asserts that these youth leaders are also skinhead leaders. The article is based on an interview with, inter alia, Alexy Mitriushin, head of the north-east division of Walking Together and also a leader of "Mad Stallion," a skinhead group known for the June soccer riot on Manezh Square in Moscow. One common interest of the two groups is to disrupt anti-globalist demonstrations. Controlling Nazi parties and youth organizations so as to create public enemies of the state is a time-tested tactic of the Soviet KGB. It is not unreasonable to ask, will the real Vladimir Putin step forward? On the other hand, our Moscow Bureau's growing relationship with the Ministry of Justice, and especially with Russia's Human Rights Ombudsman, are genuine causes for optimism. A new, disturbing trend that emerged in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks in the US is the radicalization of some of Russia's Islamic community. A few Russian Muslim leaders, most but not all of them self-proclaimed, publicly repeated the radical Islamist canard that Israel secretly planned the September 11 attacks. Rallies in support of the Taliban and the PLO have taken place in some predominantly Muslim regions. So far, such opinions are shared by a small minority of Russian Muslims and are mostly concentrated in Chechnya and Dagestan, yet this is obviously a growing trend that requires continued monitoring.

"Islamophobia" remains widespread, reflected in the opposition by some regional authorities to the building of mosques and the tendency of much of the Russian press to equate Islam with terrorism, without taking into account the diversity of the Islamic faith. Here, local leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate), who in several cases have lobbied against the construction of mosques, are as complicit as when they distribute antisemitic literature like "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion" in church bookstores. The war in Chechnya drags on, brutalizing and radicalizing Chechen civilians and creating a whole generation of rabidly racist Russian soldiers and policemen. Like the Jews, treatment of minority Christians and Muslims varies from region to region, largely dependant on the whims of the local authorities.

With the whole world riveted on the terrorist attack, a very dark day for the human rights community was overshadowed. I am referring to the U.N. Conference on Racism at Durban, South Africa where most Western human rights NGOs stood by and allowed Palestinian and Arab NGOs to succeed in passing an antisemitic resolution condemning Israel as a racist country. In that case, in my judgement, they were both unused to dealing with anti-semitism as a primary human rights violation and, due to their traditional focus on governmental abuses of individuals, unused to holding governments accountable for



the behavior of non-governmental terrorists and grassroots perpetrators of violence and hatred. A signal exception was the behavior of the International League for Human Rights, the Moscow Helsinki Group and other Russian and eastern european human rights NGOs who defended Israel against the majority of NGOs in a losing cause. It was in the context of these issues, heightened by the events of September 11, that prompted UCSJ to convene, in the Moscow offices of MHG on July 8, a conference of Russian and Western human rights NGOs to explore the implications of this new human rights paradigm. Other organizations involved in the review included Memorial, the Sakharov Center, the Center for Human Rights, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and, by email, the International League for Human Rights. Mr Chairman, I think the essence of our report and its implications can be summarized in six points:

1. Anti-Semitism, and anti-"black" xenophobia, have risen again dramatically in part as a consequence of September 11. It reflects a coalition of neo-Nazis, like the RNU and skinheads, religious nationalism, e.g. Cossacks and elements of the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate), Islamic extremists, e.g. certain Mulahs and Chechens, and old-line fascists and communists, especially in the Duma and certain major regional mayors and governors.
2. Anti-black (Caucasus) discrimination is, in part, a byproduct of the government's Chechnya-related propaganda plus on-going persecution in Moscow city. The central government's responsibility for anti-semitism is of a different character. State-sponsored anti-semitism is a relic of the Soviet era. Indeed, President Putin has made unprecedented and exemplary statements committing his government to combating anti-semitism, nationalism and extremism. However, there is governmental complicity in passivity and acquiescence, e.g., failure to investigate and prosecute, failure to hold antisemitic political leaders accountable. As the saying goes, Putin is talking the talk, but not sufficiently walking the walk. Our report can help him to do better.
3. The Human Rights Ombudsman and his regional network is the most consistent national actor in training official and public attention on the important problem that anti-semitism and xenophobia are flourishing with impunity. Putin's direct and public support of his work would send a powerful and constructive message.
4. Anti-Semitism and xenophobia are crucial national security issues beyond the hate and intimidation aimed at specific targets. That they are allowed to flourish with impunity is a critical bellwether or indicator of the grave weakness of human rights, rule of law, and civil society generally, especially the criminal justice system and the moral mood of the country. The failure to adequately confront these evils carries with it two kinds of dangerous consequences for Russia. First, it emboldens terrorists and nourishes the social fabric that tolerates them. This is both a domestic and international security threat because it raises the chances for terrorists and extremists to gain access to nuclear materials and devices—arguably a greater threat to world peace than state-controlled weapons. Second, the breakdown of human rights and civil society is both an undue burden on Russia's budget and economy and a profound disincentive to foreign trade and investment.
5. All of this suggests an evolving new paradigm for viewing the nexus between human rights and national security. The history of the human rights movements, which importantly developed in Russia, along with the Jewish national emigration movement (Refuseniks), began in the 1970s and was heavily influenced and promoted by

the Helsinki Process. The emphasis was placed on defending the individual against abuses of rights by the governments; and in this emphasis, although the issues of anti-semitism and xenophobia were recognized evils, they were not seen as major priorities for human rights campaigners. The events of the past year have demonstrated the need for a new paradigm, one that brings two issues up to parity with the traditional values for human rights: (i) that anti-semitism and xenophobia are central human rights abuses in their own right and as bellwethers as well as predictors of escalating danger; and (ii) that governments and human rights activists alike must also focus beyond concern for governmental abuse of the individual to include concern for the dangers to society at large of non-state criminals and terrorists.

6. Accordingly, human rights monitoring of their behavior, as it is performed by MHG and UCSJ, is the human rights/national security analogue to arms inspections. The results should be taken seriously by policymakers, and factored into all intelligence analyses and data bases. It can no longer be relegated to the "feel good" priorities of political speechwriters.

These lead me to some final observations and recommendations.

The Helsinki Process, involving the concerted advocacy of governments and NGOs, pressed the Soviet bloc on matters of mutual security and disarmament, expansion of market economies, and the reduction of human rights abuses. It was a relentless, collegial process that contributed importantly to the peaceful collapse of Communism across the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The lessons of the Helsinki Process are applicable to the West's response to the Arab countries which likewise encourage antisemitic and anti-American values and repress the human rights of their citizens, not least their women and children. We should be monitoring antisemitic actions and rhetoric in Russia, the Middle East and Europe as we monitor and inspect access to weapons of mass destruction, and we should be prepared to assist and encourage Arab states as well as Russia and other former Soviet republics in moving toward democracy and rule of law as we did throughout the Cold War.

Likewise, the NGO community must return to its campaigning mode to combat xenophobia and anti-semitism across Europe and the former Soviet Union. President Bush has walked the walk in a distinguished manner. His September 2002 "National Security Strategy of the United States of America," is perhaps the foremost and most unprecedented examination of human rights as being integral to national security policy. We call on him to see that his military, diplomatic, foreign aid, trade and intelligence agencies internalize these human rights values, which are at the heart of American values, into all international and bilateral affairs.

UCSJ urges OSCE to hold a Supplemental Human Dimension Implementation meeting on anti-semitism during 2003 to review and identify best practices for monitoring and reporting. In this, as in all other relevant issues, we commend the Helsinki Commission's actions and moral leadership.

Finally, no Russian leader can compare to President Putin in analyzing the problems of extremism, anti-semitism and civil society failures that must be overcome for Russia to flourish as a leading democratic country. But a country that allows extremists to flourish with impunity, bans the visits of religious leaders while inviting the likes of David Duke; registers Nazi political parties while discouraging more liberal parties and many human rights NGOs has a long way to travel. A leader who treats environmentalists as spies, is

suspicious of a free press, and who supports antisemitic and anti-American leaders at home and abroad has a lot of reforming to do notwithstanding his cooperation against the most prominent terrorists. We believe his most important next steps must be to strengthen his criminal justice system so as to secure his country from the scourge of anti-semitism and xenophobia and the risk of theft of nuclear materials by domestic and foreign terrorists. This is a cause that the American government needs to assist in, and the NGO human rights community needs to insist on. Unlike the confrontations of the Soviet era, we have much to collaborate upon.

This is a U.S. Government publication produced by  
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