



HELSINKI COMMISSION HEARING

UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON
SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Testimony :: Hon. Ben Nighthorse Campbell

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Chairman - Helsinki Commission

The anti-Semitic violence spreading throughout the OSCE region gives cause for deep concern for its scope and viciousness. Coupled with a resurgence of aggressive nationalism and an increase in neo-Nazi "skin head" activity, the leaders of the OSCE participating States face the urgent challenge of stemming the tide of escalating anti-Semitic violence while condemning such attacks against members of the Jewish community or their institutions. As President Bush resolutely declared, "We reject the ancient evil of anti-Semitism, whether it is practiced by the killers of Daniel Pearl, or by those who burn synagogues in France."

OSCE participating States, including the United States, have pledged to unequivocally condemn anti-Semitism and take effective measures to protect individuals from anti-Semitic violence. Manifestations of anti-Semitism must not be tolerated, period, regardless of the source.

I urge President Bush to communicate American concerns over anti-Semitic attacks as he meets with European leaders, including President Putin. I also hope that he will meet with representatives of the affected Jewish communities during his current trip to Europe.

Attacks ranging from shootings, fire bombings, and physical assaults have occurred in places as different as London, Paris, Berlin and Kiev. Vandals have struck in Brussels, Marseille, Bratislava, and Athens. Anti-Semitic propaganda has been spread in Moscow, Minsk and Vilnius, among others. No longer can these acts of intolerance and violence be viewed as separate occurrences, as an escalation in anti-Semitic acts is clearly manifest in Europe and the OSCE region, and the the United States is not immune.

Several governments of OSCE participating States were noticeably late in responding to the initial wave of attacks. Brushing aside evidence of an overall increase in anti-Semitic acts, some officials attributed the violence to life in high crime areas. Leaders were also slow in publicly decrying such attacks. Timidity will not suffice, as the scourge of anti-Semitic violence must be confronted head-on and elected officials must display leadership in the face of such crimes.

Responsible leaders have come forward in the aftermath of many of the recent attacks, but vigilance will remain essential. Firmly establishing visible police protection of Jewish sites

and synagogues has occurred. Investigations, arrests and prosecutions for alleged perpetrators are underway. Such resolve will be critical if the participating States are to stem the tide of escalating anti-Semitic violence in the OSCE region.