



## HELSINKI COMMISSION HEARING

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UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON  
SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

# Testimony :: The Honorable Ben Nighthorse Campbell

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Chairman - The Helsinki Commission

Today's hearing focuses on the increasingly important topic of civilian policing, local police monitoring and police training in the OSCE region, particularly those areas seeking to recover from armed conflict.

One of the more critical and difficult challenges in the transition to democracy in the OSCE region over the past decade has been the process of transforming law enforcement structures, including the police. Long used as a tool in some participating States to repress the people, the task has been to have those in police uniform serve the people. Progress in meeting this challenge has been mixed, and regrettably, in some countries those charged with upholding the law are themselves responsible for human rights violations. Organized crime and official corruption – major concerns to many of us – likewise can threaten democratic development and undermine effective law enforcement. Given my own personal background in law enforcement, I am keenly aware of the importance of professional training for police officers.

Since the 1990s the United States and other democratic countries -- bilaterally and multilaterally -- have provided significant law enforcement assistance and training to encourage as much progress as possible.

In some areas, and southeastern Europe in particular, conflict has thwarted attempts at police reform. Indeed, in some places the local police actively participated in ethnic cleansing and genocide along with paramilitaries and military units. Ethnic tensions have also been a major hurdle to overcome.

The challenge for the OSCE and the international community, not to mention their roles and responsibilities, grew in these post-conflict areas as a result.

For example:

In Croatia, both the United Nations and the OSCE have engaged local police intensively over the years in an attempt to reintegrate the previously occupied Eastern Slavonian region back into the country, and to increase the security for, and confidence of, remaining and returning Serbs.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the International Police Task Force – IPTF – under U.N. auspices, has focused on some of the most challenging aspects of civilian implementation of the Dayton Agreement, including its role in monitoring and training police.

In Kosovo, the United Nations mission – UNMIK – has had to deploy its own international force to do the actual policing in a vacuum of law and order following Serbia's withdrawal, while the OSCE has operated a police service school in an effort to build a whole new cadre of police officers in Kosovo. I have personally visited that facility and commend those attempting to foster stability and the rule of law in a very difficult environment.

In southern Serbia, the OSCE is also training new, ethnically mixed units of police in an effort to restore stability and build confidence in that conflict area where tensions often run high.

In Macedonia, where the ethnic composition of the police force has been a major issue, international monitoring and training of police will likely figure highly in resolving the ongoing turmoil there.

Meanwhile, bilateral programs of the United States, such as the International Criminal Investigative Training and Assistance Program – ICITAP – and the Law Enforcement Academy supported by the FBI in Budapest, Hungary, will continue to play a critical role.

We hope to learn more today about the accomplishments and challenges of this work.