



HELSINKI COMMISSION HEARING

UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON
SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Testimony :: Hon. George V. Voinovich

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Commissioner - Helsinki Commission

I would like to thank the Chairmen, Senator Campbell and Congressman Smith, for calling this hearing today to discuss the recent surge of anti-Semitism in the OSCE region.

As the international community continues to call on Israeli and Palestinian officials to take critical steps to end the bloodshed and work towards peace in the Middle East, I am saddened and deeply disturbed by reports of anti-Semitism that have taken place recently in some of the world's strongest democracies --- including France, Germany and Belgium.

As our witnesses will testify, many of Europe's synagogues have become targets of arson and Molotov cocktails. As reported by the BBC, Jewish school buses were set on fire and destroyed in Paris just last month. Attacks have also occurred in Russia and Ukraine.

My reaction is – my God, here we go again.

All one has to do is to read James Michener's *The Source*, visit the Museum of the Diaspora in Tel Aviv, visit the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem and the Holocaust Museum in Washington, all of which chronicle the plague of anti-Semitism in this world and what can happen if we do nothing to stop it.

Today's hearing is extremely important because of the need to bring what's going on to the attention of world leaders and opinion makers to stop this growing anti-Semitism in its tracks.

I cannot help but think – where were the Helsinki-type commissions in the early years of the Hitler regime? How could the world tolerate what many knew what was going on in Germany?

We have to stop this right now.

My hope is that these hearings will document what is going on, and with that evidence we can bring the information to the attention of the world leaders who can step in and make it stop. I assure the witnesses here today that I am going to raise some of these issues next week in Bulgaria with some of the parliamentarians at the NATO Parliamentary Assembly Meeting, particularly with officials from those countries where we have seen acts of anti-Semitism. I will be working with the Helsinki Commission to develop resolutions for discussion at the next

meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in July that will take place in all places – Berlin.

I thank the witnesses for being here this morning, and I look forward to their testimony.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.