

RUSSIA'S MILITARY ASSAULT ON  
SECESSIONIST CHECHNYA

---

---

JANUARY 19, 1995

---

U.S. POLICY REGARDING RUSSIA'S  
ACTIONS IN CHECHNYA

---

---

JANUARY 27, 1995

---

HEARINGS  
BEFORE THE  
COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND  
COOPERATION IN EUROPE  
ONE HUNDRED SIXTH CONGRESS  
FIRST SESSION

Printed for the use of the  
Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe



Available via the World Wide Web: <http://www.house.gov/csce>

## **RUSSIA'S MILITARY ASSAULT ON SECESSION- IST CHECHNYA**

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 19, 1995**

**COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE  
WASHINGTON, DC.**

The hearing was held in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC, at 2 p.m., Hon. Christopher H. Smith (Chairman), presiding.

*Commission Members Present:* Hon. Christopher H. Smith, Chairman; Hon. Alfonse D'Amato, Co-Chairman; Hon. Steny H. Hoyer; Hon. Harry Reid; Hon. Bill Richardson; and Hon. Frank R. Wolf.

*House Members Present:* Hon. Edward R. Royce and Hon. Matt Salmon.

*Witnesses:* Dr. Elena Bonner, president, Sakharov Foundation; Maryam Elahi, program officer, Amnesty International; Charles Fairbanks, research professor, Johns Hopkins Foreign Policy Institute; Paul Goble, senior associate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; Mohammed Shashani, president, Chechen-Ingush Society of America.

### **OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN SMITH**

Chairman SMITH. The hearing will come to order. First of all, I want to thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for coming to this very important hearing.

My name is Congressman Chris Smith, and I'm serving as the new Chairman of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Senator Alfonse D'Amato is the new Co-Chairman.

This is the first Helsinki Commission hearing under its new leadership. I know that Steny Hoyer is on his way to be with us, but I would like to say at the outset what a pleasure it has been over these many years, to work with him as he led the Commission.

I've spent seven of the last eight terms that I've served in Congress on this Commission. The Commission has been one of the most bipartisan bodies in the Congress, and I think it has worked very, very cooperatively in pressing human rights in Europe where Steny and I have traveled to a number of hot spots in Eastern Europe, as well as in the former Soviet Union. I believe we have worked very, very well together over those years on behalf of human rights, security, and on trade matters. I am delighted to have him again back on this Commission as the ranking member.

The topic of today's hearing, unfortunately, ladies and gentlemen, is an urgent one.

Apart from horrendous human rights violations, the war in Chechnya has brought to the fore all the underlying fissures in Russia's political and economic structures, as well as highlighted the tensions in Russia's relations with its neighbors and the rest of the international community.

Chechnya confronts Russia's Government, and by extension, all OSCE governments with the key issue of self-determination. Though Principle VIII of the Helsinki Final Act guarantees the equal right of all peoples to self-determination, the international community has never worked out rules and mechanisms for pursuing that right. Since many countries face actual or potential separatist movements based on demands for self-determination, governments have tended to side-step the issue.

With the bloody breakup of Yugoslavia, the war in Chechnya, and possibly more such crises on the horizon, we may not be able to afford this luxury any longer.

A key concern is how the war in Chechnya might affect centrifugal trends in the Russian Federation which is composed, as you know, of 89 republics, regions, and territories. All of them want a better deal from Moscow, although only Chechnya has demanded actual independence since 1991. The war in Chechnya will surely affect Moscow's negotiations with them. They have seen that Moscow is prepared to use brutal force, even if ineffectively, to keep a separatist republic in the fold. Will they now moderate their position, or try to improve their military capabilities to prepare for the worst-case scenario? This has particular resonance for the Muslim republics which see Russia marauding in Chechnya, taking sides in the Tajik civil war, and backing Orthodox Serbs against Muslim Bosnians.

So far, the hostilities have remained localized. But the question remains whether they will widen into a regional uprising with all the attendant ramifications.

Going from the global to the regional to the individual, is Boris Yeltsin really in charge? And if he isn't, who is? Boris Yeltsin, today, asserted that he is in charge. But even if so, what kind of president has he become? He seems to have no public support or institutional backing, outside the narrow circle of hardline advisors and cronies.

Can Boris Yeltsin, as the Clinton administration apparently hopes, once again spearhead reform? If he cannot, should U.S. policy toward Russia change? And if so, how?

It is noteworthy that the government official who has taken the lead in offering peace talks to the Chechens, and apparently on less stringent conditions than have been offered to date, has been Prime Minister Chernomyrdin.

He seems to be taking a more conciliatory position than President Yeltsin, although his efforts have not produced a cease-fire or modified the government's basic position.

Moreover, President Yeltsin has now stated that he will not negotiate with General Dudayev, so the prospects of a cease-fire seem somewhat remote.

A crucial, if underemphasized, aspect of the war, ladies and gentlemen, is oil. Vitaly important pipelines from Central Asia and the Caucasus go through Chechnya.

Was this the key factor that finally persuaded Russia's leadership to move against Chechnya despite all the warnings about what might happen next?

The various official explanations for deciding to use military force have never mentioned oil, but it is hard not to suspect that Moscow's resolve to retain control of strategic assets at home and abroad was critical.

Whatever the motivations, Russia's manner of handling the crisis has alarmed the entire OSCE community. Moscow never informed the OSCE about its intention to mobilize such a large force, which far exceeds the prescribed limits.

Second, an all-out assault on Grozny and the other towns and villages violates the commitment in the 1994 Budapest Document to try to limit civilian casualties during hostilities in one's own country.

On January 12, the Permanent Council of the OSCE adopted a statement which emphasized Russia's violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Chechnya.

The OSCE called for an immediate cease-fire and the beginning of negotiations for a political settlement, while respecting the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation. As of today, we understand that Moscow has agreed to let an OSCE delegation travel to Grozny.

This fact-finding mission will be headed by the personal representative of the Hungarian Chairman who is in office and the head of the Warsaw-based OSCE Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

I would be interested in hearing from our witnesses what their views are on the OSCE reaction and how the OSCE's capabilities could be best used to resolve and mitigate this crisis.

Whatever one thinks, ladies and gentlemen, about self-determination, the borders of a country, and Chechnya's right to independence, there can be no disagreement about the human rights disaster that has taken place.

Russia's indiscriminate bombing and shelling has obliterated residential areas, hospitals, and orphanages, even though most of the people in Grozny now are not young Chechen fighters, but reportedly are pensioners, including many Russians with no place else to go. Thousands have been killed, and hundreds of thousands are refugees.

It is telling testimony that Sergei Kovalev, the Chairman of President Yeltsin's Human Rights Commission, while risking his own life in Grozny, has bitterly castigated his president for launching this war.

So, too, have virtually all reformist elements in Russia. Today, we have a sterling collection of witnesses to help us make sense of the current crisis and its implications.

Dr. Elena Bonner is a world-renowned defender of human rights and President of the Sakharov Foundation. Last December, she resigned from President Yeltsin's Human Rights Commission over the war in Chechnya. We are especially pleased that she could be here with us today.

Paul Goble, who will be speaking later on, is a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, where he specializes in the Soviet successor states. He was previously Special Assistant on Soviet Nationalities to the Assistant Secretary for European Affairs and Baltic Desk Officer at the Department of State.

Mohammed Shashani is the president of the American Chechen-Ingush Society of America, and chairman of the Union of the North Caucasian Associations in America.

Charles Fairbanks, who will also be speaking later on, is a research professor of international relations at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, and directs the Foreign Policy Institute's Program for Russian and American Security Policymaking.

Maryam Elahi is the program officer for Europe, the Middle East and North Africa at Amnesty International. And she is a specialist in international law and human rights.

Let me say, finally, that we had invited the Department of State, as well as the Russian Embassy, to send spokespeople to testify.

Because of scheduling problems, they said they could not be present, but we plan to hold another hearing on the subject next week, hopefully with their participation.

At this point, I would like to yield to my good friend and distinguished ranking member, Steny Hoyer, from Maryland for any opening comments he might want to make.

#### **OPENING STATEMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE HOYER**

Mr. HOYER. Thank you very much Chairman Smith. I appreciate your yielding. And I also want to say that I'm sorry that I was late because I understand that I missed your very gracious words at the beginning of your statement.

I always hate to miss gracious words when they're said about me and particularly with this change, Dr. Bonner, that we've had in the Congress.

I look forward to working with Chairman Smith. As he pointed out, this Commission has acted in a bipartisan fashion and parties were not as relevant as were philosophies.

I look forward to working with you, Mr. Chairman, and with Senator D'Amato. When it comes to human rights, there are no majority parties, no minority parties. There are only people suffering and those trying to help them. You, Mr. Chairman, have a sterling record as one of the helpers in the former Soviet Union, in the former Yugoslavia, here at home, and in other trouble spots of the world.

I'm very pleased to be here at the Helsinki Commission's first hearing in 1995, though I deeply regret the subject is so pressing and has such dangerous implications for international stability and security.

Boris Yeltsin's war against Chechnya has generated the greatest threat to human rights and democratization since the attempted coups of August 1991 and October 1993.

The massive bombing and shelling of Grozny have caused thousands of deaths and injuries with elderly noncombatants reportedly comprising many of the victims.

Now I said, "Boris Yeltsin's war against Chechnya," even though many have questioned whether he made the decisions. I happen to think, personally, that he did.

But in any case, he is the President and must bear the ultimate responsibility. Perhaps even more important, this is Yeltsin's war as opposed to Russia's war.

One of the few silver linings in this tragic story is the openly expressed opposition of most of the political elites and most of Russia's citizenry.

Public opinion surveys in Russia indicate that the people of Russia, by an overwhelming margin, oppose this attempted military solution to what is clearly a political problem.

That does not mean the people of Russia are willing to see Chechnya independent. They are not. They want to keep their country together. But they strongly disapprove, as I understand it, of President Yeltsin's methods and the callous disregard for human life displayed in this campaign. Their opposition and their good sense are very heartening.

Also encouraging, Mr. Chairman and ladies and gentlemen, is the stance of Russia's mass media. Newspapers, radio, and television have consistently reported, for the most part, accurately on the war and on opposition to it. And while the government has tried to pressure the media to color reportage, I am cheered by two things. First, the government has either been half-hearted in this effort or inept or perhaps both.

Second, the media has resisted this effort fiercely. This gives us, it seems to me, grounds to hope that democracy and freedom of expression are not only not dead in Russia, but will survive, hopefully, the Chechnya debacle.

Frankly, one of the most depressing aspects of this war is how quickly Russian Government spokesmen have reverted to Soviet habits of brazenly lying, even when incontrovertible evidence to the contrary is broadcast for all the world, and for Russians, to see.

Mr. Chairman, I, again, congratulate you on having this hearing. It deals with a difficult subject.

Central to this subject, of course, is human rights which is a universal value, that at least in the expression of all peoples, has been accorded support. It is the breach of action undermining the expression of principle that this hearing deals with. But it is obviously complicated by one of the most difficult issues that we confront as we see democracies emerging. And that is self-determination. It is an issue that we dealt with in this country in the middle of the last century.

But putting self-determination and the recognition of existing borders aside, we must demand of ourselves and others within the international community that the international community sanctions only the peaceful resolution of political disputes. And that is what this hearing ultimately is about. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman SMITH. Thank you, Steny, for that very eloquent opening statement. As usual, you have, I think, pinpointed the major issues that we have to deal with and confront at this hearing as we look at the Chechnya crisis.

I would like to introduce Matt Salmon, if he would like to make any opening statement.

#### **STATEMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE SALMON**

Mr. SALMON. Mr. Chairman, I greatly appreciate this opportunity to come and listen. And pretty much, that's what I'm here to do. I've heard your statements. I come to be educated. Thank you.

Chairman SMITH. Thank you. At this point, I'd like to ask the witnesses, starting with Dr. Bonner, if she would proceed. And we're asking that you would keep your oral comments to about 10 minutes. Any written statements will be made a part of the record. If you go a little beyond 10 minutes, that's fine. But try to refrain to allow time to question each of you. Thank you. Dr. Bonner?

STATEMENT OF DR. ELENA BONNER, PRESIDENT, SAKHAROV FOUNDATION

Dr. BONNER. I am very grateful that I was invited to this hearing today to talk about the situation in Chechnya and about the grave mass violations of human rights there.

I'd like to use this opportunity to express my gratitude to Mr. Hoyer, with whom I have met many times before and with whom I communicated with when this Commission was under his leadership. And I want to express hope that now that Mr. Smith is the Chairman, we will be able to communicate as openly and as fruitfully.

I am not going to repeat the general principles of territorial integrity which are formulated in my written statement. Instead, I want to concentrate right now on many important things which are happening in Chechnya right now which are very dangerous for Chechnya, Russia and for the world.

I want to emphasize that I want you to pay attention to the fact that the only faction in Russia's Parliament which has consistently supported Mr. Yeltsin's decision to start the war in Chechnya since its beginning up to now are the radical nationalists of Mr. Zhirinovskiy.

We can see that what Mr. Zhirinovskiy has proclaimed in his book, basically a national socialist book, is what President Yeltsin has now taken into practice and making real.

In support of President Yeltsin, Mr. Zhirinovskiy said, "Russia doesn't need to be loved. Russia should be feared."

Is it the case that the Western countries are now beginning to be afraid of Russia, and for that reason, afraid to denounce the policies of Mr. Yeltsin?

I expect that the representative of Amnesty International here will talk about the specifics of grave violations of human rights which are happening right now in Chechnya.

That's why I will try to concentrate on other things. I want to remind you that 20 years ago, in making real the commitment of this Congress to human rights issues, the Congress of the United States passed the Jackson-Vanik Amendment.

This amendment was related not only to the right of people to leave one's country of residence, but more general to the behavior of some countries in the human rights area which would be necessary in order for the United States to be able to conduct normal economic relations.

In my opinion, the Jackson-Vanik Amendment is as relevant now as it was 20 years ago.

I am expressing not only my own opinion, but also the opinion of the Chairman of the Russian Presidential Commission on Human Rights, Sergei Kovalev, from whom, just yesterday, I received a fax confirming that his position is that the Western countries, all the countries of stable democracies, should use all diplomatic means of pressuring the Russian Government and President Yeltsin to stop the war in Chechnya.

In regard to mass violations of human rights, I count, as such, not only the recent bombardment of innocent civilians and the destruction of houses and indiscriminant killings which are happening in Chechnya recently, but also, prior to that, for many months, a campaign of lies—of racist propaganda against the Chechen people by government-sponsored general mass media.

I will give only one example. A few days ago, the Russian TV has shown pictures of mutilated bodies of Russian soldiers. But Sergei Kovalev and his appeal to the mothers of the soldiers has stated that that mutilation was not done by Chechen people at all, but it was a result of continuous bombardment and artillery shelling which prevented the bodies of killed soldiers from being picked up, so they were feasted upon by stray dogs.

One more thing, Chechen authorities have compiled and made public lists of Russian soldiers which are held by the Chechen side. But the Russian army has not compiled any such lists. And we should be afraid for the Chechen fighters who become prisoners of the Russian army because they can be killed on the spot.

A great cause for concern is the statement by the Prosecutor General of Russia, Ilushenko, who has stated that those soldiers and officers who have refused to carry out orders to attack the civilian population will be prosecuted, and criminal cases will be opened against them.

The danger of the fact that we do not have any lists of Chechen prisoners of war being held by Russians is that there are reports of unofficial orders to Russian soldiers to shoot any prisoners, who are wounded, on the spot.

The Russian mass media repeats the charges that this war is conducted not by Chechen people, but by some bandits. It is also claimed that there are many mercenaries in Chechnya.

But yesterday, we saw an exchange of prisoners of war between the Chechens and Russians. Three or five POWs were exchanged. Among them was a 13-year-old Chechen boy.

It is amazing to think how he ended up being a prisoner of war. Who made the decision to have a 13-year-old boy a prisoner of war? And it is well known that that case is not a singular case. There are other children who are POWs in Russian camps.

The lies that are being spread by high-level officials are dangerous not only to Russia, but also to the whole world.

The day before yesterday, Prime Minister Chernomyrdin announced that, on authority from President Yeltsin, he has started peace talks with Chechens.

The negotiation session in Moscow has taken place, and negotiations were supposed to continue in Mozdok, yesterday. But the head of the former KGB, which is now called Federal Security, Stepashin, has said that there will be no negotiations with bandits.

So, General Rakhlin who was supposed to represent Russia at these talks simply did not attend the meeting. And today, Prime Minister Chernomyrdin has repeated the exact words of Stepashin stating that there will be no negotiations with bandits.

The question arises, "Was the start of negotiations in Moscow intended only for consumption by Secretary of State Christopher? Was it intended to mislead the whole world?"

Especially since from the statement by the Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, it seems that precisely beginning of the talks on Chechnya have allowed Mr. Christopher to conduct his meeting with Foreign Minister Kozyrev in a more congenial atmosphere.

I have great concerns now that Russian troops have taken power in Grozny that Russian authorities will try to present the situation there as, "The war is over and everything is normal."

But I believe that the war in this region is only now starting. I suppose one of the important questions for today's hearing will be the question of economic aid to Russia. It is my opinion that, under these circumstances, all economic aid to Russia should be suspended at least until the new elections of the State Duma in Russia.

The only exceptions to these, in my opinion, should be humanitarian aid intended directly for the area of conflict and for victims of warfare and help directed toward the creation of democratic structures.

There are quite a few organizations in the United States that are working in this field in Russia. These are democratic organizations such as Freedom House, the National Endowment for Democracy, and so on.

I think their work should be expanded. I think the U.S. Congress and the administration have acted somewhat hastily in reducing support for such informational organizations as Radio Liberty, Radio Free Europe, support for some of the free independent newspapers in Russia itself, and so on.

Now, coming back somewhat to the beginning of my statement, I want to say a few words about the tragedy of the Chechen people.

Not very far from this building there is the Holocaust Museum which is a testimony to the fact that we do not deny the genetic memory of the people who were subject to terrible repression, such as the Jews.

I think it is a grave mistake of the Russian authorities that they deny no less tragic genetic memory of the Chechen people. The Chechen people were being destroyed.

Genocide against the Chechen people was committed by czarist Russia, by Stalin. And now we have, once again, the Russia that wants to appear democratic to the whole world and is trying to destroy Chechnya as a nation or as a people.

Chairman SMITH. Dr. Bonner—

Dr. BONNER. I'd like to just ask for 1 minute of personal memories. Several years ago when I was actively involved making statements about the grave violations of human rights in Nagorno-Karabakh, I was several times in private conversations with the accused of defending Christians against Muslims and not trying to understand the point of view of Muslims.

Today, I can be accused of the opposite thing. But I am defending the point of view that an individual is supreme over state and over brutal force, independent of racial or religious connotations.

Chairman SMITH. Dr. Bonner, I want to thank you for that very, very moving statement and for the eloquence about your resignation from the Human Rights Commission, which has caused many, especially within governments in the West, to take a very hard look at this situation.

As you know, there were many government leaders, including our own President, but many in Europe as well, who initially called this an internal affair which, unfortunately, may have inadvertently given the wrong message to the government in Moscow.

I think it's important that everyone now speak with one voice so that this brutality will come to an end. Thank you for your very riveting and very powerful statement.

Before we go to Dr. Shashani, I would note that some other Commissioners have come in, and I would ask them if they would like to say something very briefly.

Senator Reid, Congressman Frank Wolf, Congressman Richardson, would you want to say anything?

I thank you gentlemen for being here. Dr. Shashani, I would appreciate your trying to keep your testimony within about 10 minutes to allow ample time for questioning. Thank you.

**STATEMENT OF MOHAMMED SHASHANI, PRESIDENT,  
CHECHEN-INGUSH SOCIETY OF AMERICA**

Mr. INTERPRETER. Chairman Smith, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for arranging this timely hearing to discuss the human rights violations conducted by the Russian Government against the innocent civilians of the Chechen Republic.

Let me first describe the Chechen people. The Chechens are an old ethnic group that are not Slavic and have lived in Chechnya for thousands of years.

They have a unique language that is different from the Slavic and Turkic languages prevalent in that area. Their culture, traditions, and religions are different from that of the Russians.

They have nothing in common with the Russian people. The human rights violations of the Russians against the Chechen people goes back to the 18th and 19th centuries when czarist Russia started moving southward to conquer the Caucasus.

The Chechen and other North Caucasian people rose to defend their homeland. And the Chechens fought against the Russians from 1785 to 1859, when finally Imam Shamil was captured and exiled.

During that period of time, Russian forces used inhuman methods in conquering the Chechens. They used to go to villages inhabited by women and children because the men were in the mountains carrying on guerilla warfare against the Russian forces. And they would kill all people and their stock and then burn the houses, poison the waterwells, and burn the crops. Killing the fighters' families and denying them food, water, and shelter were tactics used by the Russian forces to crush the resistance of the Chechen people to Russian occupation.

Russia occupied all of North Caucasus by 1864. During the Bolshevik revolution in Russia, the North Caucasian people convened a Congress of the Union of Peoples of North Caucasus and proclaimed their independence on May 11, 1918 and elected Abdumajeed Tchernoy, a Chechen, as their first president.

Lenin, the leader of the Communist revolution, Germany, Turkey, and Bulgaria recognized the federation of North Caucasus. In 1921, the Red Army invaded North Caucasus and annexed it to Communist Russia.

As if the atrocities inflicted upon the Chechen people by czarist Russia was not enough, the worst was yet to come in the form of the Genocide of 1944.

The decision to deport the Chechen people was taken on February 11, 1943. They planned carefully for 1 year the deportation procedure.

The population was assembled in all the villages on the evening of February 22, 1944 to celebrate Red Army Day. They were surrounded by troops, and the deportation decree was read to them by security officers accusing the whole nation of collaborating with the Germans.

Stormy scenes ensued and many people were killed. In the march toward the deportation center, some people were unable to keep up with the rest, and those people falling behind were gathered, doused with gasoline, and burned alive.

Near one village alone, 600 people between men, women, and children perished by burning. Hitler and Stalin were one of a kind with no regard to human life.

During the journey of deportees in cattle trucks that lasted for several weeks, deaths were reported to have run as high as 50 percent, mainly old people, but including many Typhus victims of all ages.

It is clear from the history of the Chechen people that czarist and communist Russia have subjugated the Chechen people by using brutal force and methods of genocide to keep them part of their empire.

The Chechens longed for the day when they could be free from Russian domination and be able to exercise their God-given right of self-determination. When Communist Russia collapsed, they saw a window of opportunity to fulfill their long-awaited dream of independence.

On October 27, 1990, over 1,000 delegates from all over Chechnya and from Chechen in Diaspora declared the independence of the Chechen Republic.

On October 27, 1991, democratic elections were held in Chechnya and Dzhokar Dudayev was elected President with an overwhelming majority of 85 percent of the vote.

On March 31, 1992, the Russian Federation was formed, and Chechnya was not a cosigner for that Federation. On November 26, 1994, the Russians led a tank and air attack on the capital city of Grozny, but were defeated.

And about 100 Russian officers and soldiers were taken prisoner. The Russian Government denied categorically any involvement of their soldiers in the attack. But subsequent events proved them to be lying. On December 11, 1994, Russia invaded Chechnya with over 40,000 troops and hundreds of tanks on the pretext of restoring constitutional order in Chechnya.

They have orchestrated the Communist style propaganda of vilifying and dehumanizing their opposition such as calling the Chechen people criminals, Mafia, bandits, gangs, and the like to justify whatever actions they took against the Chechen people.

The strategy worked at the beginning of the invasion, and even some Western news media were echoing Moscow's dehumanizing propaganda. And the world community did not react to the invasion and called it an internal affair of the Russian Federation.

Russia interpreted this indifference as an approval of their actions and wanted a fast victory and end to the problem.

It unleashed its massive fire power and started bombing the city of Grozny, indiscriminantly terrorizing the civilian population and leveling complete blocks of apartment buildings and knocking out power and gas lines and leaving the residents of Grozny with bombed-out homes and no food or heat in the snow-covered city.

When Yeltsin ordered stopping of the bombing, that order was not carried out. And Yeltsin insisted that that order was carried out.

But Kovalev, who just returned from Grozny notified President Yeltsin that air raids were going on, and he could not believe that. On New Year's Eve, when the world was celebrating the coming of the new year, the Russians took this opportunity to storm the city of Grozny.

And after a bloody battle, the Chechen defenders drove the Russians back and inflicted heavy casualties on them. Since then, the Russians have gone mad in bombing everything in sight.

The continued bombardment of Grozny had reduced it to rubble. Hundreds and thousands of people have fled Grozny and the surrounding villages to Dagestan and Ingushetia.

The conditions of the refugees are miserable, lacking food and medicine. The people remaining in Grozny have no food or medicine, and water has to be fetched from the frozen Sunzha River which is polluted and not fit for drinking.

Corpses are still in the streets of Grozny and under the rubble of bombed out buildings. And the Russians don't stop bombing long enough to allow both sides to pick up their dead.

At one point, journalists said that bombs were falling on Grozny at the rate of one bomb per second. In the last 10 days, journalists have reported that bombing has been extended to the mountain villages and farms. And television showed scores of livestock that have been killed by helicopter gunships. The Russian Government is intent on terrorizing the Chechen people into submission.

Seventy percent of the Russians oppose the war in Chechnya. And the majority of the Russian Parliament members oppose the invasion.

Yegor Gaidar who heads the Russian Choice party was quoted by the New York Times as saying that the war in Chechnya "is not the internal business of Russia," contrary to the views of the U.S. administration.

Russia's "military crimes," including bombardment of cities in Chechnya, "would not be regarded at the present stage as the internal affairs of any state" he says.

He is asking Western governments to speak out against this invasion. Anatoly Shabad, another Member of the Russian Parliament, also said that, "Yeltsin has initiated a crime against humanity. And from a moral point of view, we cannot support him. He is not our President anymore." Former Finance Minister, Boris G. Fyodorov, and human rights activist, Elena Bonner, who is sitting right next to me, the widow of the Nobel Peace Prize-winning dissident, Andrei Sakharov, have all broken publicly with President Yeltsin over Chechnya.

"A democratic country cannot keep by armed force an ethnic group that does not want to remain in it." That is what my colleague, Elena Bonner, has said.

Claiming Russia was turning back to totalitarianism, she resigned from the President's Human Rights Commission. The people who oppose this indiscriminant bombing of the Chechen people include many Russian public figures such as Russian Orthodox Patriarch, Alexei II, who stated that "No one can remain indifferent to the death of peaceful civilians."

Former President Mikhail Gorbachev called the war a disgraceful, bloody adventure. Economist, Gregory Yavlinsky, once a prominent member of Yeltsin's planning committee, said to his boss, "Boris Nikolayevich, resign. Don't wash Russia with blood."

From all these stories and statements from Russians, not Chechens, it is clear that the human rights of the Chechen people have been grossly violated.

“The Russian ground assault on Grozny had turned the city into a daily meat grinder that consumes bodies, buildings, and weapons.” says Barry Renfrow from the Associated Press.

So far, 18,000 civilians have been killed and hundreds of thousands made homeless. Another crime perpetrated against the Chechen people, once the Chechens were defeated, was the repeat of the 1944 deportation of the Chechens.

This was outlined in a secret document signed by Chernomyrdin and obtained by the Chechen Government. And a copy in Russian is attached to this statement.

The Russian military has used cluster bombs, needle bombs, bacteria bombs, and booby-trap bombs against innocent civilians in Chechnya. The United Nations should enforce the Articles of the United Nations Genocide Convention adopted by the U.N. General Assembly on December 9, 1948 and ratified by the former U.S.S.R. in 1954.

Article I of the Convention states that “Genocide is a crime under international law which the contracting parties undertake to prevent and punish.”

Article II states the following, “In the present convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group as such:

A. Killing members of the group;

B. Causing grievous bodily or mental harm to members of the group; and

C. Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part.”

All these three conditions apply to the Chechen people of what the Russian military has done to them. The first three items of the Genocide Convention have been inflicted on the Chechen people.

And thus, we call on the international community to enforce the Articles of the Convention and save the Chechen people from annihilation. The human rights of the Chechen people living in Moscow and other Russian cities have been violated.

Nobody speaks about this. Chechens have been arrested at random in the streets, beaten, and imprisoned. Why? Just because they are Chechens. Nothing more.

Some have been shot and the bodies disposed of. The Human Rights Commission should investigate the disappearance of Chechens in Moscow and elsewhere in Russia.

I urge the Helsinki Commission to do all it can to publicize the gross violations by Russia of the human rights of the Chechen people. Take actions necessary to entice Russia to stop the war immediately and negotiate a peaceful settlement to the conflict.

Take into consideration the long struggle of the Chechen people for freedom and independence from Russian domination. The Chechen people want to live in peace, harmony, and mutual respect with their Russian neighbors. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman SMITH. Dr. Shashani, thank you for that very eloquent statement. The succinct walk through recent Chechen history is most appreciated. And I think, for all assembled, your statement was very, very powerful. I do thank you for that.

The word is going out that there will be zero tolerance for the continuance of this kind of bloodshed, and the sooner that all Western governments speak with that kind of voice, the better.

I would like to introduce the distinguished Co-Chairman of the Helsinki Commission, a man like Senator DeConcini and Representative Hoyer, who has a commitment in his heart and worked hard on behalf of human rights and has traveled abroad to promote human rights. Senator Alfonse D'Amato of New York is here and would like to say a few words.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF CO-CHAIRMAN D'AMATO**

Senator D'AMATO. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And let me, first of all, commend you for holding these hearings, Mr. Chairman. I know this is an important matter to you.

And like your predecessors, Senator DeConcini and Congressman Hoyer, I certainly look forward to working with you in that same spirit of cooperation that has existed. Indeed, this Commission has been a beacon standing up and fighting for human rights. It has a grand tradition. And I know that you will continue that.

Mr. Chairman, I'm going to ask that my full text be placed in the record in its entirety in the interest of time.

But let me say that I join you not only in these hearings, but I join you in your outspoken condemnation of the Russian attacks on unarmed civilians.

These violations must be stopped. They cannot be tolerated. And if it means that this country must say to the Russians, "We will not continue foreign aid. You jeopardize our help in bringing about what we thought was reform in your system." Then so be it.

We have a right, and our citizens have a right, to question whether U.S. taxpayer dollars should be providing aid to Russia when we see what is being done to the Chechen people.

It is simply unacceptable. And the clearer we are in making this pronouncement, the sooner, hopefully, the Russians will get that message. I hope it doesn't come to us having to cutoff aid and push us into a period that none of us wish to return to. But certainly, there's been ample demonstration that, when we have stood up for the principles of freedom and human dignity and it meant that maybe we don't continue business as usual, it has paid dividends.

So, I join with you, Mr. Chairman, in your attempt to focus attention on this horrible situation and to see if we can't get the community of nations to help in the tragic plight of the Chechen people. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Senator D'Amato has been placed in the appendix.]

Chairman SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I would ask Ms. Elahi, who is from Amnesty International, if she could speak now. Also, if you could keep to about 10 minutes so we could ask some questions, that would be appreciated.

**STATEMENT OF MARYAM ELAHI, PROGRAM OFFICER, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL**

Ms. ELAHI. Amnesty International welcomes this opportunity to testify before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe on the human rights situation in Russia during the conflict in Chechnya.

Mr. Chairman, I will be very brief in my oral remarks and would like to request that my written testimony be placed in the record.

Chairman SMITH. Without objection, it will be.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Elahi has been placed in the appendix.]

Ms. ELAHI. Thank you. In the context of the large-scale violence in Chechnya, our concerns are limited to the human rights dimension of the conflict.

We take no position in the territorial, military, or political disputes that are involved. We are appealing to all parties in the conflict to respect human rights and humanitarian laws as recognized in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the Geneva Conventions, and other international and regional human rights treaties.

We have appealed to both sides in this current conflict to protect non-combatants and to facilitate appropriate access to detainees by the International Committee of the Red Cross, the organization mandated to work for the observance of humanitarian law.

As has been mentioned earlier today, the ramifications of the current fighting in Chechnya will be pervasive and long lasting.

The fighting in Chechnya has demonstrated the deep commitment and resilience of those in Russia committed to a free and open society, notably members of Memorial and other human rights groups and Sergei Kovalev and his colleagues in the Duma who have demonstrated their courage and integrity by monitoring and protesting the violations.

The U.S. Government should use every avenue open to it to encourage approaches that will serve to ensure that human rights are protected and also to ensure that lasting guarantees of such rights are as enumerated in the Universal Declaration or institutionalized in the Russian Federation.

Hundreds of people, including many civilians, have reportedly died since Russian troops entered the territory of Chechnya on December 11, 1994.

The city of Grozny, in particular, has undergone prolonged and heavy bombing and shelling, including areas which are predominantly, if not strictly, civilian.

In recent weeks, questions have been raised about possible problems in the chain of command control of Russian forces fighting in Chechnya. Amnesty International would be concerned if individual units deliberately attacked civilians whether or not they were obeying orders from above.

Those in charge of the armed forces on both sides must issue clear orders that civilians should not be deliberately attacked. And it must be ensured that such orders are known and obeyed. Those who disobey such orders should be brought to justice. On December 17, Russian troops reportedly shot dead 10 people, including 4 women.

According to one report, a convoy of 10 vehicles containing civilians seeking to flee the fighting was passing through an army or Interior Ministry checkpoint.

Seven vehicles reportedly passed without incident. But troops opened fire on the last three cars. Survivors allege that troops opened fire without warning on the cars and continued firing on those seeking to escape.

Official Russian sources confirm that a number of deaths took place after troops opened fire. However, they claim that the shooting was in self-defense.

The Russian Government must ensure that an investigation into this incident is promptly carried out by an effective body which is impartial and independent of those allegedly responsible, that the report is made public, and those responsible for violations of human rights are brought to justice.

Amnesty International would like to take this opportunity to remind the U.S. Government and every other government that violations of human rights are not internal affairs.

By maintaining the position, until quite recently, that events in Chechnya were strictly an internal Russian affair, the U.S. Government failed in its responsibility to act when human rights were at risk.

Amnesty International recommends the U.S. Government urge the government of the Russian Federation and the Chechen authorities to prevent further violations of international human rights and humanitarian laws by taking the following steps.

First, to prevent violations in the conflict area, maintain strict chain of command control to ensure that military personnel adhere to international human rights and humanitarian laws, facilitate appropriate access to prisoners by the ICRC, facilitate access to the OSCE and human rights monitors.

Second, to ensure adequate investigation and prosecution of reported violations, all complaints and reports of deliberate targeting of civilians should be investigated promptly, impartially, and effectively by a body which is independent of those allegedly responsible.

All reports of such investigations should be made public. Any persons found responsible for violations should be brought to justice within bounds of international law.

Third, to ensure that all members of the Armed Forces are aware that they have a right and duty to refuse any order to participate in an extrajudicial execution or breach of humanitarian law. Effective means to communicate this right and duty to all members of the Armed Forces must be implemented immediately. No members of the Armed Forces should be prosecuted or otherwise disciplined for refusing to carry out such an order.

Mr. Chairman, we urge you to keep a very close vigil on the human rights situation in Chechnya and to remind both parties that in resolving the political crisis, it is of critical importance that they integrate human rights safeguards and standards into any agreement that is developed between them in order to prevent violations and to bring to justice those responsible for violations thus far.

We believe that such a step would have a profound impact not only for the future of Chechnya, but for the entire Russian Federation. We thank you for this opportunity to testify before the OSCE.

Chairman SMITH. I thank you for your fine testimony and for the good work that Amnesty does around the world. It's always reassuring to know that Amnesty and other human rights groups which work along side you are on the job wherever tyranny shows its ugly face.

I do have some opening questions, and then I would like to yield to my colleagues for their questions. Dr. Bonner, the former Russian ambassador to Washington, Vladimir Lukin, has said "The U.S.S.R. used to be strong, but not respected. Then Russia became weaker, but respected. Now it is weak and it is not respected." Do you generally agree with that view?

Dr. BONNER. I am not in total agreement about the question of weakness of Russia. Russia never has been weak. It's a huge country with large resources. And even in the upheaval of reconstruction and the periods of uncertainty and instability, it was still always, in a certain sense of the word, a strong country. And it still is. But that doesn't change the statement that the force should not be used to resolve internal difficulties or difficulties in relations with other countries.

Chairman SMITH. Do you tend to agree with what Mr. Hoyer was pointing out earlier that, if there is a silver lining in this terrible tragedy, it is that the democratic institutions, the press, several of the parliamentarians, and even several military officers and their men, have stood down and have not participated in this. Is that a sign that democracy is actually taking root?

Dr. BONNER. Of course, if you compare what is happening right now to Stalin's time or Brezhnev's time, you can see different democratic changes which have taken place since. But looking at the more recent period, at the path that Russia has traveled in the last 3 years since August 1991, we have to conclude that there was a certain step back, that we are actually retreating on the path to democracy.

And I should remind you of a similar sort of transformation and a similar path toward democracy and then retreating from it has been performed by Mr. Yeltsin, himself.

Several years ago when similar events were happening in Vilnius, Mr. Yeltsin has traveled there and has supported unequivocally the right of Lithuania to seek independence and the rights of the Lithuanian people. And now he has committed a similar aggression against people in his own state.

Chairman SMITH. I think you make an excellent point. It's interesting to note that Mr. Hoyer who was Chairman, I believe, that year, several other members of the Helsinki Commission, and I were in Vilnius only a few days after the tanks moved on people there. We were very much gratified by Boris Yeltsin's statement to the military that they stand down. And now, in a rather dramatic turn of events, he is the one who is actually doing what Gorbachev had done in the Baltics.

Dr. BONNER. I am also very gratified by the stand that Boris Yeltsin had taken at that time against the use of military force to resolve the problems of the Soviet Union.

Chairman SMITH. Let me, at this point, yield to Senator D'Amato, for his questions for the witnesses.

Senator D'AMATO. Mr. Chairman, I'm just going to raise two questions. And they are ones that I think many of my colleagues have raised privately. Does Mr. Yeltsin have the ability to bring about a cessation of this military action, one?

No. 2, would there really be negotiations where the status of the Chechen people were to be considered as it relates to independence or the question of sovereignty? There's a fine line. Do you believe that the people would want sovereignty and could settle for that? Or is it total independence? Doctor, you might want to respond as well and Ms. Elahi.

Dr. BONNER. It is my opinion that prior to this bloody war, it was possible to actually negotiate about some sort of sovereignty, conduct negotiations about the degrees of such sovereignty, and looking for ways to satisfy the Chechen people with different approaches. But, once this bloody confrontation has taken place, I do not know how it would be possible to talk about it.

Today, in practical terms, in Chechnya, there is almost no family that hasn't lost some loved one in this war and which was not made destitute by that war. Most people in this room are younger than myself.

But I remember. I have seen with my own eyes a bombed-out Dresden, and I have seen with my own eyes a destroyed Stalingrad. Today, we have done, in Chechnya, the same thing.

Mr. SHASHANI. If I may comment, Senator. I think as Dr. Bonner mentioned that it would have been possible to negotiate before this war.

Dudayev has been asking Yeltsin to negotiate since 1991, even though the government denies that, and they say that Dudayev did not want to negotiate. He has been begging them, "Let us sit down and talk about this situation."

But they refuse to talk to him unless Dudayev agrees with their condition. And that is, "lay down your arms first, then we'll negotiate." That is not acceptable.

The Chechen people have spoken, and they wanted independence. But after this barbarism that we have seen, this annihilation process that has been undertaken, I don't think the Chechen people will even settle for that.

I think they want complete independence. And I think as freedom-loving people up here in the U.S.A., we have to support the independence of Chechnya.

INTERPRETER. Senator D'Amato, Dr. Bonner would like to add also on the first part of your question about the ability of President Yeltsin to stop the bloodshed.

Dr. BONNER. To cease military activities as a first step in the negotiation process with Chechnya, Yeltsin has to conduct talks with Dudayev. He has to conduct talks with people who actually are in authority in Chechnya, not present every several days a new spectacle of conducting talks with some new marionette government that Moscow has created.

We have seen many such puppet governments created by Moscow in the last half year such as Khazbulatov, Khadzhiiev who is the former Minister of Oil Industry of the Soviet Union and is now the head of the Moscow hand-picked government of Chechnya, although he, himself, is not even a Chechen, but Adig.

And now more people such as Sulemenov. These people have no authority in the eyes of the Chechen people. They have no respect of the Chechen people. Negotiations have to be conducted with Dudayev.

Senator D'AMATO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Hoyer.

Mr. HOYER. I'm sure Mr. Goble will testify on this issue as well, but I presume that the problem of confronting President Yeltsin and others in authority in Moscow is the extent of their actual power. You indicate, prior to the war, that a negotiation of some type of autonomous status may have been possible, but that as a result of the war and the attacks, that that may not be possible and that independence from Dudayev's and the Chechen people's standpoint may be the only alternative.

If that is the case, how much flexibility do you believe Yeltsin has or others in authority in Russia have as it relates to a precedent that this would establish for other regions of Russia of similar mind?

It seems to me that that is the problem confronting the resolution of this conflict. As you pointed out in your statement, Secretary Christopher has been talking to the Foreign Minister.

And I'm sure that was part of the discussion because I am confident the administration is pressing for a peaceful resolution of this and trying to act as an honest broker in pushing Russia to resolve this matter because it is obviously going to undermine, as Senator D'Amato has pointed out, properly so, any constituency in the United States for continuing support for the Russian democratic movement and the free market movement in Russia.

The bottom line is, what flexibility does President Yeltsin now have and does he fear the establishment of a precedent that will not stop? I know Mr. Goble is dying to testify on that, and I'll look forward to his statement too.

INTERPRETER. A precedent of some entity separating from the Russian Federation?

Mr. HOYER. Yes. In other words, there are other regions who feel, I'm sure, similarly situated.

Mr. SHASHANI. May I take a crack at that?

Mr. HOYER. Dr. Shashani, I'd be glad to hear your comment.

Mr. SHASHANI. Thank you. I think there is plenty of leeway for Yeltsin to go around this thing. First of all, Chechnya is not a signatory to the 20 subgroups of the Russian Federation.

Only 19 of these subgroups have joined in the Federation. Chechnya never joined in. So, that is a legal point that he can use.

And he has said as late as today, once the war ends, that he will allow free elections so the Chechen people will determine for themselves what they want.

Everybody knows what the Chechen want except Yeltsin. So, he's just playing games with them. So, there is no document whatsoever that Chechnya has been part of Russia by choice ever in history, neither during czarist Russia, communist Russia, or even in democratic Russia.

INTERPRETER. Dr. Bonner would also like to add to that.

Dr. BONNER. I think at present, Yeltsin, on his own, doesn't have much authority. But Yeltsin only exists now as the implementer of decisions of the Security Council which represents the interests of the army and of power ministers, such as state, security, interior, and the military industrial complex.

But any economic or diplomatic pressure on Yeltsin is really translated into economic and diplomatic pressure on that entity of collective government. And they do have the space for maneuvering. I think as a result of negotiations, it would be possible to create some sort of a new form of cooperation or relations.

And here I may sort of act as a personal witness. For 2 years, I have had an exchange of letters with Dudayev. And I can witness, for sure, that Dudayev never has refused negotiations with Russia.

But Russia was refusing to negotiate with Dudayev. I have also had extensive contacts with Dudayev regarding the conflict between Ossetia and Ingushetia in which he could have been of help. But once again, Russian authorities have prevented his constructive participation.

Mr. HOYER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman SMITH. Mr. Salmon.

Mr. SALMON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is for Ms. Elahi. I just came here as a freshman legislator, and my family—we were privileged to do a tour of the Holocaust Museum about 3 weeks ago.

It was a very harrowing experience for me and my family. But I see some parallels here. I heard Dr. Bonner mention earlier that, in her mind, there were some parallels as well to what happened during the ethnic cleansing with Hitler and the Jews.

And I'm wondering—last October there was a campaign to remove the dark-skinned people, i.e., the Chechens and other Caucasus minorities from Moscow.

We understand that it still goes on to a certain degree. What influence did anti-Chechen prejudice have in moving Yeltsin and his advisors to military action? Do you think that part of this could be an ethnic issue, a racial issue?

Ms. ELAHI. That's an issue that's very difficult for us to assess. Obviously, we've documented some degree of the racism, the arbitrary arrest of individuals, and deportation.

However, to draw a correlation between the events as they are now taking place in Chechnya and the ongoing sort of racist behavior not just in Russia, I might add, in many countries in Western Europe as well, it's very hard to draw that sort of correlation.

Mr. SALMON. Thank you. I have one question also for Dr. Bonner. I know many Americans are very concerned that, if Boris Yeltsin is not in power, the alternative could be quite worse.

It could be tragic for our relations with Russia. Could you comment as to those thoughts?

Dr. BONNER. To begin with, I think the question of who is going to be the President is less important than the question of who is going to be in the next Duma, in the next Parliament. The election for this is scheduled now in less than 10 months from today. As to the Presidential elections, I do not know whether the next president would be better or worse than Yeltsin.

I have concerns. I am afraid that the war in Chechnya is not over, that the situation is going to develop into a very grave one. I'm going to explain right now.

I expect that, even though the military campaign in Chechnya was a shameful event from every point of view, nevertheless, in the next few days we will proclaim victory and Grachev, Stepashin, Yerin I think will receive recognition as heroes of Russia.

And then using as a pretext, the claim that, as a result of war the region's economy as well as the Russian economy is depleted, the authorities will introduce the emergency rule in Russia.

In which case, all the elections and, of course, any democratic path of development would be cutoff.

Mr. SALMON. I appreciate your comments. Thank you very much.

Chairman SMITH. I want to thank the panel for their outstanding testimony. It is very helpful to this Commission to hear from people who care so deeply and know so very much about the situation.

I do thank you, and I'd like to bring on the next panel at this point. Paul Goble, is a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Prior to joining the Endowment in 1991, he was Special Advisor on Soviet nationality problems to the Assistant Secretary for European Affairs at the State Department and was the Desk Officer for Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Earlier, he was a Special Assistant for Soviet nationalities at the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research, and a Soviet Affairs Analyst at the Central Intelligence Agency.

Charles Fairbanks is a research professor of international relations at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and directs the Foreign Policy Institute Program for Russian and American National Security Policymaking. Dr. Fairbanks has taught at Yale and the University of Toronto and, from 1981 to 1984, was on the policy planning staff of the State Department.

I thank you gentlemen for your patience, and we look forward to your testimony. We would appreciate it if you could, within about a 10-minute period, summarize your statement and then we will proceed with some questions. Your written statement will be made a part of the record. Mr. Goble?

**STATEMENT OF PAUL GOBLE, SENIOR ASSOCIATE,  
CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE**

Mr. GOBLE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In important ways, the Chechen people have won the battle of Grozny, even though that city now lies in ruins. And they will win the struggle for independence even though the forces arrayed against them appear now overwhelming.

Moreover, their actions, and even more, those directed against them, will have dramatic consequences for the Chechens themselves, for the government and people of the Russian Federation, and for us as well.

Because these consequences are certain to be far more fateful than those that were occasioned by the end of the Soviet Union, each of them deserves to be examined closely and with care.

Consequently, I want to applaud you and the Commission for holding these hearings. Thank you for asking me to participate, and allow me to underscore my agreement with your remarks and the members of the Commission about just how horrible this is, because the situation has gone from being a very small problem to being at the center of the possibility of the destruction of much that we had hoped for in the postcold war world.

Six months ago, only a handful of people in the world knew about Chechnya and about its aspirations for independence. Indeed, certain leading American newspapers could not even spell the name of the people correctly.

Now, however, because of the actions of the Russian security forces and the Russian army and the behavior and statements of Mr. Yeltsin and others in Moscow, the whole world knows who the Chechens are.

Almost all Chechens now back Dudayev, something that was not true 6 months ago. Most of the North Caucasians now back Chechnya, something that was not true 6 months ago.

And many of the other autonomous formations within the Russian Federation now believe that they should make a move too. In short, the Chechens have established themselves on the map of the world.

No one will ask whether they played third base for Detroit last year anymore. But the botched Russian operation against the Chechens has highlighted three other things which Moscow and the Western apologia have been at pains to deny.

First, recent events have shown that the Chechens are not a criminal class, that the Chechen cause is not about Islamic fundamentalism, and that President Dudayev, himself, is not a thug.

Last October, the Russian Government expelled “persons of Caucasian nationality” from Moscow, some of whom were criminals. Tragically, the Russian Government has continued to say that they expelled criminals, a high percentage of whom happen to be North Caucasians.

Tragically, a year ago, the American Government and other Western governments failed to say anything.

Tragically, the operation of the OMON in Moscow and other Russian cities continues with friends of mine who are from the Caucasus being roughed up, having their doors kicked in by Omontsi as recently as December 26th.

The Chechen cause is not about Islamic fundamentalism as much as the Russian Government is at pains to try to portray it, attempting to find allies in the United States and elsewhere, with the Russians somehow being the defenders of Europe against Islam. To the extent that argument is accepted, tragically we will all find ourselves the losers.

And President Dudayev, himself, is not a thug. Reference has been made by members of the Commission to the fact that Boris Yeltsin was in the Baltic countries in January 1991. He wasn't the only person in the Baltic countries in January 1991.

Major General Dzhokar Dudayev, the youngest major general in the Soviet Air Force and Commandant of the Tartu Air Base, on January 8 went on Estonian television and said he would not permit the introduction of Soviet paratroopers to shoot at unarmed civilians and freely elected governments. And he was instrumental in protecting Boris Yeltsin when Yeltsin flew to Tallinn on January 13. Second, the Chechens have demonstrated for all to see that they can fight, that they can resist, and that they are thus credible as a state people.

That is not true of many of the other formations and could not be true. But it is certainly true of the Chechens. And their ability to resist will grow, not decline, even and perhaps especially if Grozny is overrun.

And third, the public attention given to the Chechens has called everyone's attention to the fact that the Russian Federation and its borders are far and away the most artificial of any of the post-Soviet successor states.

The borders that we are so worried about defending were drawn by Stalin, and in the Russian case, they were drawn by negation. That is to say, Stalin drew the non-Russian borders first. What was left was the Russian Federation. Moreover, he drew them in particular ways to exploit ethnic conflict and justify repression.

It is one thing to defend borders. It is far more important to defend human rights. I would like to echo Congressman Hoyer's remarks about the fact that there is a silver lining in this very dark cloud.

While to an increasingly frightening degree, Boris Yeltsin has recapitulated in Chechnya. Mr. Gorbachev's approach to the Baltic States in 1990–1991, drawing on many of the same arguments such as “if we let these people go, we'll have to let all the people go.”

An approach which, at that time unintentionally, and now equally unintentionally, is going to transform a small irritant that could have been solved by peaceful negotiation into the potential explosive device that could blow the Russian Federation apart, just as Mr. Gorbachev's efforts to hold the Baltic countries in by force did to the U.S.S.R.

Indeed, now the tragedy is that the challenges facing Yeltsin and the central Russian Government are far worse, even than those that were facing Mikhail Gorbachev in 1991.

He has absolutely no good choices. If he continues the military operation, he will not win. The Chechens will go into the mountains, and they will not rely on the drug trade, as some unnamed senior administration official said in *The Washington Post* yesterday. They will be supported by the population. And there will be a guerrilla war across the North Caucasus. There will be pipelines blown up which will have serious consequences for the Russian State. You can't defend pipelines from terrorist actions, something that the Chechens understand, the Russians should understand, and we have to understand.

If Yeltsin starts negotiations and makes concessions to the Chechens or even can seize their independence, he will certainly lead other regions to conclude that armed resistance works, which is a very dangerous lesson. Some republics will line up and ask for even more. Seven of the 21 other non-Russian ethnic autonomies have already gone on record in the last week demanding renegotiation of their relationship with Moscow.

Still others are thinking about it. And it is certain that what was a problem that could have been solved, as the Balts could have been solved in 1990, became the occasion as a zipper pulling the whole place apart. The seven leaders of the Middle Volga autonomies, it should be noted, include three ethnic Russians who are protesting Moscow's behavior as well.

And if the struggle goes on in the North Caucasus, if negotiations don't happen, if independence is not granted, then Moscow will face a situation where it will be necessary to take steps such as those Dr. Bonner has pointed out.

This will bleed back into the society. While I totally reject Mr. Kozyrev's suggestion that this is like the American Civil War, a view echoed by the State Department spokesman not long ago, there is one thing about that comparison that's true. And that is, that a country half slave and half free cannot long endure, as Lincoln said.

And if there is an effort to try to hold the Chechens and North Caucasians by force alone, I guarantee you that will bleed back into Moscow, into Petersburg, into the other Russian cities, and make Russia a different country than we hoped for.

But it is true, there has been a wonderful development in Russia which has been reflected in the Chechen events. Thirty years ago, the great Chechen emigre Sovietologist, Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov, observed that he didn't object to calling the Soviet Union an industrial society. Not because there wasn't any industry. Because, of course, there was. But rather because there wasn't any society. Because, of course, there wasn't.

Now, there is a society. And mercifully, that society embraces an ever greater proportion of the Russian people. It now embraces more than just a few heroic individuals like Elena Bonner and Sergei Kovalev, both of whom have spoken out in the defense of human rights and minority rights before.

Now it includes almost all Russians who are themselves sickened by the nightly television pictures of the carnage their government is inflicting on Grozny without their approval. According to polls, more than four out of five ethnic Russians now oppose Yeltsin's use of force in

Chechnya. And this outcry has led the Russian Parliament to begin to respond, to try to put pressure on Yeltsin. That's why there was a secret meeting between Mr. Chernomyrdin and Mr. Zhirinovsky 10 days ago to try to make sure that Zhirinovsky would block such moves.

I hope Chernomyrdin can play a positive role. I must say, however, that report does not give me much encouragement. Tragically, if Mr. Yeltsin is playing by the Gorbachev playbook of 1990–1991, so too is the West. We seem to be reading the same script we were reading in 1990–1991. Although in recent days at least, finally, there is some evidence of a learning curve.

If Secretary Christopher had said on December 12 what he said yesterday, I have a feeling that the course of events which now will have so many tragic consequences would not have taken place.

Now, however, we have less influence because we didn't speak up earlier. For the first weeks of this conflict, then in 1991 and as now, most Western leaders dismissed Moscow's attack on Chechnya as that country's internal affair or even tried to domesticate it by paraphrasing the Russian Foreign Minister that this was somehow like the Civil War.

Then as now, most Western leaders rushed to accept the claims of the Kremlin that the victims of the violence were somehow to blame for it, even though the Chechens have declared independence 3 years ago and have been trying to negotiate ever since.

Then as now, they had the notion that the leader of the Kremlin was somehow not to blame. There was a camarilla. Somebody else was doing it, even as they accepted that he was the only conceivable leader with whom they could negotiate, thus proving that we have a lot of intellectuals in the West who can have two contradictory ideas in their head at the same time.

And then as now, most Western leaders failed to see what the stakes are and how their approach, one which could unfortunately be defined as a commitment to *stabil'nost'uber alles*, was contributing to the very instability that they claimed not to want.

If we're going to get out of our current box, it seems to me that we have three challenges to meet. An intellectual one. A practical one. And a political one.

Intellectually, we need to understand that the Russian Federation is far less an integral state than any of the other successor states, and that efforts by Moscow to make it into one by force will lead to its demise, just as they did with the demise of the Soviet Union.

We need to recognize that what we are dealing with now is not so much the demise of the Russian Army, but the demise of the Russian State. Trying to rebuild it by force will lead to all kinds of tragedies there in the neighborhood and with us. Moreover, we must recognize that whatever happens in Russia will inevitably have an impact on its neighbors and on its ability to have good relations with us.

Denying the obvious, that others feel threatened by a Russia behaving this way even if we do not, is not a good basis for constructing an approach to these countries or for developing a policy of our own.

Indeed, the unreasonable expectations that some have raised about the possibilities of Russian-American partnership only guarantee that, when we must part company with Moscow on something like Chechnya, we will do so either very late, lest we call the entire relationship into question, or we will find ourselves in a position where something like this single problem could rip through the entire relationship.

And that is a big risk.

Practically, it seems to me, we need to craft a policy that denies aid to the Russian Government without denying it to the Russian people. The Russian people deserve support. The Russian Government deserves condemnation. That's not going to be easy. It's hard to separate it out. But it seems to me a minimum first step is to end our relations with the security organs, and expand our aid in the humanitarian sector.

And politically, we need always to keep in mind that we are in a period of incredibly rapid kaleidoscopic change. Only 10 years ago, I would remind you, Boris Yeltsin was a regional communist party leader. Only 4 years ago, Mikhail Gorbachev was ordering the killing of people in the Baltic States. Only a little over a year ago, Yeltsin was dispersing the Russian Parliament by force and expelling people from his capital because of their skin color. And only a year ago, the Russian Government falsified the voting statistics in order to claim that there had been an adoption of a new, strong, Presidential constitution.

In such a situation where people and positions change so quickly, we must recognize that our role is to articulate our principles, both because they are important and because there are Russians who still care about having our approval, rather than supporting individuals regardless of what they do. We should support Yeltsin when he is promoting democracy and economic reform. We should oppose him when he is not. He deserves both praise for much that he has done and condemnation for what he is doing now. He does not deserve uncritical coddling.

And I'd like to add that it is not the place of Western countries to decide who should be the president of Russia. That is a choice for the Russian people. It is, however, a matter of principle that the Western countries should insist that the president of Russia live by the rules of the game, including human rights, if he's going to be part of the West.

Otherwise, and tragically the otherwise has been true, we will be removing an important constraint on the actions of the Russian Government and find ourselves being used in ways we cannot possibly want. And this will, thus, unintentionally subvert our own possibilities for moral influence not only in Russia, but elsewhere around the world.

The danger of Chechnya is not only its threat to Russia, not only a threat to the American/Russian relationship, but to the possibility that Western countries will have an impact on other countries through what they say and their words being taken seriously.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Paul A. Goble has been placed in the appendix.]

Chairman SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Goble, for that fine statement. I would like now to ask Dr. Fairbanks if he would give his testimony.

**STATEMENT OF DR. CHARLES FAIRBANKS,  
RESEARCH PROFESSOR, JOHNS HOPKINS  
FOREIGN POLICY INSTITUTE**

Dr. FAIRBANKS. I'm grateful for the opportunity to talk to this Commission about the momentous war in Chechnya. We could talk about the North Caucasus in the question period, but I want to talk about the Russian reaction to the war because that's the most interesting thing, I think.

Americans who followed Russian foreign policy in the last year or 18 months thought we were seeing a growing Russian consensus on a nationalist and assertive foreign policy, a consensus that included almost all of the foreign policy establishment, including democratic intellectuals, most of them. But this consensus also seemed to have its roots in the nationalism of the Russian public as shown in the high vote for Zhirinovsky.

Now, what did the Chechnya war show? First, it showed that anti-democratic individuals are indeed working quite energetically to expand Russian power by brutal means. The Secretary of State and other officials have presented this as a matter of Russia defending its territorial integrity, but the same expansion of Russian power by brutal means has been carried on outside Russia's state frontier, particularly in Abkhazia, where a long series of operations were carried on to destabilize and dominate the independent government of Georgia. Again, in Azerbaijan recently there was an attempt at a coup which would overthrow the president, which failed.

I think, in fact, the Chechen war is one element in a larger struggle that is going on partly within Russia, partly between Russia and other former Soviet states, to control the oil of the Caspian. More specifically, Russian and Chechen soldiers are dying, I believe, over the issue of who will get the bribes for oil export licenses.

Now, these individual officials that I've talked about turned out in the Chechen crisis not to be competent. Not only were the military tactics ludicrously unprofessional, but the campaign against Chechnya showed a deeper problem, which is the strategy of expanding Russian power by creating disorder on the periphery.

We now see this disorder rebounding on Russia, coming home to Russia. Dudayev's fighters, who have fought much better than anyone expected, got part of their arms, their training, and their combat experience from the Abkhaz war against Georgia which was planned and organized by these expansionist elements in the Russian Government. Now, today, Abkhaz fighters, trained and armed by the Russians, are fighting on the side of Dzhokar Dudayev in Chechnya. So, this is a very incoherent strategy of expanding Russian power. It's one that, at this point, is infecting the Russian Army with disorder or rather revealing the disorder in the Russian Army.

My next point would be that Russia today has no central government in the sense of an organization where lower officials have the habit of obeying higher officials. That was shown in the 1991 coup. It was shown again in 1993. The Chechen war shows that Yeltsin has made no substantial headway against that state of affairs.

The Russian Government is a place where one official does not recognize another official as speaking for Russia. There's not a sense of being part of a common entity. Officials just give their contradictory opinions, if you follow them in the news, like any other citizen would give their opinions. This is the result of a far reaching disintegration of the state machinery which has been going on, at least, since 1985. And I think it has profound implications for American policy.

The crisis has also shown that the Russian people do not feel that the government represents Russia. There is a very strong sense of Russia, and a sense of Russia and Russians being abused and mistreated, which is understandable, I think. But there is not a sense among Russians that this government represents them.

I believe, fundamentally, most Russians regard their government as being like a gang of robbers. Because the Russian people—it's only one indication of this—have massively rejected the war. As Congressman Hoyer said, "This is Yeltsin's war, not Russia's war." That is the great surprise, I think.

What happened to that assertive and nationalist mood that many American experts were saying pervaded the Russian public even more than it pervaded the Russian Government? You would have expected that Russian nationalism would be more in evidence on the Chechen issue than any of the "foreign policy" issues because it is within Russia's national frontier.

The great surprise was that not only was the public as a whole opposed, but the nationalists inside and outside the army were opposed. Even Zhirinovskiy's first reaction was to oppose the war in Chechnya.

I would draw from this that we have deeply misunderstood Russian nationalism, except for the nationalism of a few officials of the kind I spoke of. The expansion of Russian power is not a desire or instinct, but a posture. It's something, a kind of routine, that people go through which is a response to some other need. Not something that people actually want. This is also true of the concern for Russians abroad.

There is a real problem of Russians abroad, of their human rights. But the Russian state up to this point has done more for the Abkhaz, the Serbs in Bosnia, and the anti-Dudayev clans in Chechnya than for Russians abroad.

Further, I am struck by how Western, or Western democratic, is the culture of foreign policy debate now in Russia. Great freedom of speech, no respect for authority, unlimited partisanship—it can become the same kind of mess that, in our worst moments, American foreign policy debate can degenerate into. But the rest of the time, it's a feature of democratic checks and balances. And it's enormously useful to us, I think.

The Chechen war shows that even the present degree of democracy in Russia is an enormous gain for world peace and security. And it's extremely important to the United States to maintain it as long as possible.

There is something deeper in the public's reaction to the Chechen war, I think. There's a lot of partisanship in it, a lot of distrust of their government in it. But there is also a deep, deep aversion to fighting, killing, and dying, something that most Americans also have and most Western Europeans have even more. The Chechens, for example, do not have it. But Russians are, in that respect, like us. They are fundamentally Western in this. And I must say that that's a surprise to me as well.

I hope that we can discuss the policy implications of the war during questions. For now, the one thing I would hope everyone would remember that we have learned from this war is that the Russian people are not imperialist. I end there. Thank you.

Chairman SMITH. Thank you, Dr. Fairbanks, for your testimony. I will start with a few questions and yield to my colleagues.

Earlier today, at a meeting of the International Relations Committee in this room, Zbigniew Brzezinski was our witness, and he touched on issues all around the globe.

I asked him a number of questions regarding the Chechnya situation, and his comment was, "We should have been more alert," we, being the Clinton administration, the State Department. He noted there

were many warnings which should have moved us to the point of being proactive—which is my word—but he said there were many warnings. He also said the comparison to a civil war was “absurd,” and that lends legitimacy to the use of force.

Perhaps my colleagues have read this, but I would point out too, that there was a very incisive and very critical article published in the International Herald Tribune by John Maresca, who was our Ambassador to the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Mr. Maresca said, and I will quote very briefly, “President Bill Clinton has called the episode in Chechnya an “internal” Russian matter, and has expressed hope that the Russians will carry out their repression as quickly as possible.”

“Meanwhile, the spokesman of the U.S. State Department has compared the attack on Chechnya with the American Civil War.”

And he points out that, “The fact is that the White House, and the president who resides there, have in our time acquired a central responsibility as the West’s voice of moral authority, and President Clinton has abdicated this role in the way he has treated the Chechen crisis.”

Mr. Goble, you talked about a learning curve. Mistakes, I think, clearly have been made not just by our own government, but by governments in Europe as well. As a result, you point out there’s less influence because we did not speak out earlier. I think these reactions are tragic and unfortunate, and if you want to speak to that as well, that would be fine.

But, where do we go from here? The OSCE has made some strong statements that it wants to fashion a mission to go to Chechnya. What role perhaps would the United Nations have to play in this, if any?

Certainly, the OSCE is trying to play a role. How do we reclaim that moral authority to speak out boldly? Instead of trying to nuance this to facilitate change, are we going to say mistakes have been made? It’s time to say you’ve made a gross violation of human rights against an entire people. Change has to be forthcoming. Mr. Goble?

Mr. GOBLE. I’d like to address both parts of your question. The first is how did we miss this?

Most people who are covering Russia, most people who are so-called Russian experts, in fact, know nothing about the country beyond the ring-road. The ring-road around Moscow is far more of a barrier to understanding than is the beltway around Washington.

The fact is that Russia is an enormous country. We have not developed a cadre of experts on Russia. We have a large number of people who are experts on Moscow and a couple of other cities. And that’s about the ethnic Russians.

If you talk about some of these other minority peoples who speak very strange languages often and who have names that are hard to pronounce and spell, the one way I know an issue is getting hot is when I get three journalists calling me in the space of a morning asking me how to spell some group and where it is relative to Moscow.

We have not paid attention to these groups. If we had been reading the North Caucasian press, which we have not been doing as a government or as a community of experts in the West, if we had been paying attention to the discussions about Chechnya that have appeared in a variety of places in the Transcaucasus, in the Middle Volga, in Kazan, the capital of Tatar Republic, we would have been aware of the extent to which this was a fault line issue.

If we had even been reading the Baltic press, which has covered this rather more extensively than has the American press over the last year or so, we would have known a great deal more.

We haven't. And I think that's a major problem. If we'd known what was coming, we could have given a warning.

I think we surrendered a lot of our moral authority when we didn't protest the expulsion of persons of Caucasian nationality very publicly last October. I mean, I think we were simply wrong.

As to what we should be doing in the future, I am very pleased that the OSCE is getting involved. I'm not sure I see a role for the United Nations yet.

For one thing, I think the OSCE should be given a shot on this. I think the most important thing, however, as we get involved, both the OSCE and the United States, is to reflect on how this is connected to other things.

Whether Yeltsin is in charge or not, whether there is a Russian Government or not, are issues that are important to discuss. But anybody in Moscow operates within a certain number of constraints. And we have to understand those constraints. Tragically, 6 months ago, they could have negotiated Chechen independence, and that would have been the end of the Chechen question.

That is no longer true, tragically. It has spread a great deal more widely. And the fact that there is no central institution is leading to a situation where Russian regions are beginning to talk about walking out of this enterprise. In the last issue of December 1994 of Moscow News, everyone was impressed by the articles about Chechnya. There were half a dozen articles about Chechnya. The article that probably mattered the most was back on page 14. It was a description of a meeting of the Russian leaders, of the Russian Far East, saying they were very unhappy with Chechnya.

They were very unhappy with what the Russian Government was doing. They wanted a new deal. And if they didn't get it, they were going to lead the civic accord and start making demands about radical changes in Moscow or between themselves and Moscow.

And I think before we get involved, we should start thinking about those broader questions. Because I think Congressman Hoyer is right. Any government in Moscow operates under constraints. And we have to understand where those are if we're not going to unintentionally produce something we don't want to see.

So, I think we should be very tough on the human rights question right now because there are obvious violations. And I think we should be equally tough about the need to negotiate this politically rather than the use of force. But I think as we get into it, we have to understand where the fault lines from this can go. Because while I agree that the Russian people are not imperialists, I believe there are, shall we say, objects of interest that a Russian Government could whip up Russian opinion to project.

And one last point and then I'll shut up. I think there's been a lot of loose talk about how the Russian Army isn't there anymore. You know, why were we afraid of these people, obviously they can't fight?

I think it's terribly important to understand that the Russian Army didn't want to be there. This is not an enterprise that was led by the Army. The secret police did this just like in 1991 with Gorbachev. The

army gets sucked in, doesn't want to be there. The population is opposed. The draftees don't want to fight. The military commanders aren't happy about this task.

The fact that they can't perform there, I would argue, should not be extrapolated to mean that the Russian Army can't do anything. It's not the army of 5 years ago or even 1 year ago. But I think it's very dangerous some of the things that are being said now about how the Russian Army or the Russian military couldn't be used, could not be effective under any circumstances.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman SMITH. Thank you. Mr. Hoyer, I believe, has to leave.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Goble, Dr. Fairbanks, I apologize. I must leave because I have another meeting that I have to go to now. I would observe, and I'm not sure Chairman Smith recalls this, but Senator DeConcini and I, Mr. Goble, did in fact write a letter to the President prior to the last United States-Russia summit, subsequent to the Caucasians being expelled from Moscow and raised the issue.

However, having said that, I think your criticism—we did not make it as public as we should have. We probably should have had a hearing at that time on the issue that would have made it much more visible than we did.

That might have been useful. I'm also reminded, ironically, that Senator DeConcini and I, long before or, at least before Yugoslavia broke up, wanted to have hearings. The State Department was adamant that, if we had one hearing, we would precipitate the break-up of Yugoslavia. Apparently, it did whether we had hearings or not.

In any event, I want to thank Chairman Smith for having this hearing. I think that one of the lessons that we have learned and one of the strengths of the Helsinki process, and we're now going to get confused. We're still the Commission, not the organization.

Now that we have the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe, we're still the Commission. But one of the things I think we've learned, and, Mr. Goble, you referred to this, and, Dr. Fairbanks, obviously you, I'm sure reflect this as well, is that very few of these issues are helped by being kept in the dark.

Now there is a great institutional effort among the bureaucracies of all the countries of the world to try to want to keep it in close. But my experience has been that in even the short run, that such action really is not helpful. And this hearing, I think, is one step toward sending a message that there is a very serious concern in the United States with reference to how Russia or Yeltsin is conducting this enterprise.

Certainly, contrary to international standards that we need to strengthen at every turn. So, I thank you for being here. I regret that I can't bring Dr. Fairbanks into that colloquy that you wanted to get to. At least I'm sure that Chairman Smith and maybe others will do that. But I thank you very much for being here. I've read both of your statements. They're excellent.

And they've educated me. Mr. Salmon mentioned earlier about the historical aspect that Dr. Shashani had brought forward. I certainly leave this hearing better educated and more resolved. Thank you very much.

Chairman SMITH. Thank you, Steny. We appreciate that. Mr. Royce?

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Goble, on one of your comments here you said we need to draft a policy that denies aid to the Russian Government without denying it to the Russian people.

What happened to our plans to boost civil society in Russia and to shore up democratic institutions and to try to find a way to reform and control the impulses of the KGB and other coercive state mechanisms in Russia? What went wrong with the aid policy to Russia? Because something has failed us in a major way and failed Russia and failed the people in that part of the world.

Mr. GOBLE. I think that something very profoundly went right, as well as went wrong. I think that the Russians are speaking out, I think some of the press coverage is a reflection of some of the projects, the National Endowment for Democracy, the USIA programs. I think those have been helpful in producing the public reaction.

I think that what has gone wrong is that Mr. Yeltsin has exploited, what I call, the incredible power of weakness argument just as Mr. Gorbachev did. He goes around saying, "I'm so weak you must support anything I do." And people say, "Apes Yeltsin la deluge." We've had Zhirinovskiy as a candidate. We've had chaos as a candidate. And that as a result, we have not been addressing the problems of the KGB, the secret police.

And make no mistake, this policy in Moscow originated with the secret police, not the army. The army would not have done this on its own. We Americans tend to blame the army thinking they're the most conservative people. Wrong. This is the secret police. January 1991 was the secret police.

To get involved with that, is to get involved not in things that you give aid to, although we have cooperated with some of their police agencies. I think we have to reexamine that even if it's done in the name of good things. That kind of cooperation, unfortunately, sends a signal of moral equivalence which isn't there yet with respect to the institutions in the Russian Federation.

Second, I think we have to be very clear. Mr. Yeltsin has engaged in the renaming of a lot of Soviet era institutions and not their dismantling. The United States has made the mistake of thinking that economic reform is more important than democratic reform and with a certain Neo-Marxist notion that, if they get the economics right, the democracy will follow.

Why should one make that assumption? There are too many counterexamples. They might get the economic reform right, but if the political system is wrong, big trouble. We've seen that elsewhere in the world. We saw it in Germany which had a very powerful economy. I think we should be far more concerned about democratic institution building than we've been.

I think one of the things that bothers me, and I think Charles Fairbanks and I disagree slightly about just how Western a country Russia is. I think Russia needs to be integrated into the West. One way to do that, I think, would be much larger educational exchanges.

In the academic year 1993-1994, which is the last year that I have numbers for, there were 65,000 students from the People's Republic of China in American Universities. There are 2,600 Russians. If you want to have an impact on this place, you're going to have to do more. But we've got to speak out about dismantling the secret police.

I think if the Russians are asking us for aid, of any kind, we have a right to say that, if you're going to get our aid, you must do certain things to play by the rules of the game. Having police forces that go around arresting people because of their skin color is simply wrong, morally and totally at variance with American interests. And you can't do it.

It is true that Congressman Hoyer and others did speak out in October 1993. The American Government didn't. And that's the problem. We've got to be very clear about that.

I'm opposed to cutting off all aid to Russia. I want to have a relationship with the Russian people. They've been right. They've been better than some Western governments. But I want to make very sure that none of our money, or none of our public statements, appear to support the organization of repression in the Russian state, but rather are directed specifically to dismantling it.

Russia becoming a democracy is far more important to the relationship with us than Russia becoming a capitalist society. Thank you.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Royce. Before we conclude, I'll just ask some additional questions. Dr. Fairbanks, did you want to speak to that issue?

Dr. FAIRBANKS. Only to say that I absolutely agree about the importance of the National Endowment for Democracy and other efforts that do reach democratic individuals and groups rather than the government.

It also strikes me that the fact that Russia does not have a unified government, means that we can choose our interlocutors in our relationships with Russia to substantial degree. And through leaks in Moscow, it's quite clear who is in favor of this brutal war—Yeltsin, Kozyrev, Stepashin, the head of the former KGB, and Grachev are the most important people—and who was against it, primarily Chernomyrdin.

And since they still want a lot from the West, particularly from the IMF and World Bank, it's possible, I think, to strengthen the more responsible elements by simply refusing to give anything to somebody like Kozyrev, if he comes asking.

Chairman SMITH. With respect to U.S. aid to Russia Congress and the administration will have a very difficult time trying to figure out what is the best course of action. I can say, I think without any fear of contradiction, aid is at risk right now as I speak.

Dr. Bonner had testified earlier about suspending that aid. Dr. Goble, you made the point that getting aid and assistance to the people, as opposed to the government and yet that distinction may be very hard to draw. Humanitarian aid may be one way to facilitate that. The Commission received a fax statement from Leonid Guzman, a spokesman for the former Prime Minister, Gaidar. And, I would like to quote very briefly from it because it makes a point which I think needs to be made.

As part of the debate, you might want to respond to it. Mr. Guzman is a member of the Executive Committee of the Democratic Choice of Russia and, again, an advisor to the former Prime Minister.

He writes in this statement, "Russian democracy has not died, but is ill. Its death would be a tragedy not only for Russia, but for the world. Assistance for Russian democracy today is not only the moral obliga-

tion of all those who support the values of freedom and human dignity, but it is also the only way to ensure a less dangerous world for all of us and for our children.”

He points out, “It would be a tragic mistake to reduce economic cooperation with Russia, and even worse to impose economic sanctions. Such actions would be a gift to Russia’s antidemocratic forces. It would enable them to consolidate their current positions. By hurting ordinary citizens, sanctions would give those forces the confirmation they are seeking of the evil intentions of the West.”

Again, that is coming from someone who, I believe, believes very strongly in democracy. How would you respond to that kind of statement? What would your advice be to us, and by extension, to Congress and the Administration as we look at the aid question?

Mr. GOBLE. First of all, Mr. Chairman, there is a broad range of options with regard to aid that it is not either we continue to give them as much as we have in the same way that we have, or we impose economic sanctions.

It seems to me that what you do is you signal very clearly your displeasure with certain things, indicating that there is a ratcheting up that will take place if changes do not occur. A lot of that can be done in private. You don’t have to beat them about the head with the linkage issue. OK?

I think the argument that you mustn’t cutoff aid because it’ll help the Russian right-wing is a variant of, “I’m so weak you have to support me.”

In June 1991, there was a classical cartoon published when Mikhail Gorbachev went to the G7 in London. And it showed him in the guise of a bank robber standing at a bank window holding a gun to his head. And the caption said, “Give me your money, or your friend gets it.” Now, I think that was a false argument then. I think it’s a false argument now.

I would not advocate economic sanctions against Russia. I’m in favor, in fact, of a great deal more aid than we have been willing to give up to now. But I would do it in a different way.

I would get it to NGO’s. I would get it to local officials. I would get it to those who are identified with democratic policies. And I would do things that strengthen the communications network. Seeing this on TV has mattered a lot. I would echo Dr. Bonner’s comments about Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe.

I think it’s tragic that those have been cut back and are being cut further back. One of the reasons the Russian Government hasn’t been able to get away with this is the whole world is watching. It’s terribly important that the Russian Government, as Congressman Hoyer has pointed out, realize that the whole world is watching.

If the radios continue to perform that function, the Voice of America does, our cooperation with journalists does, I think those kinds of things should go on. Because I believe that some of the expressions of Russian democratic opinion and opposition to the Chechnya war are a result of our aid, a result of some of our programs, not in spite of what we’ve done. Thank you.

Chairman SMITH. Dr. Fairbanks.

Dr. FAIRBANKS. Yes. Let me speak to that too. I think that because Russia does not have a real government, diplomacy has very little use, though it does have some.

Aid is the primary thing that gives us leverage in the former Soviet Union. So, it is necessary to trim it. But one has to do that quite carefully. I think we don't want to aid Yeltsin, Stepashin, and their war machine. What do we want to aid?

Well, it seems to me one can identify in the Russian people who clearly are the supporters of democracy and the people who are friendly toward the West. And let me just speak of two groups here.

One group is coal miners in places like the Kuzbas; the Free Trade Union Institute is working with them quite actively. But they don't have enough money to do anything very serious.

Second, what Russians call the scientific and technical intelligentsia. It would be hard to translate, but people who read and write for a living of whom there are a staggering number in Russia and who are being wiped out by the hardships of the economic transition.

Now, let me give you a figure that I think is very striking. The average salary in Russia averaging all the professions is about 260,000 rubles a month. The average salary of people who read and write for a living, who tend to be peculiarly close to us, is 160,000 rubles. The average salary in the gas industry, which benefits from these shenanigans that led to the Chechen war, is a million rubles. We are allowing the people who are our constituency in Russia to be destroyed by the transition to the market. And that could easily be changed I think.

Chairman SMITH. Mr. Goble, you did this again today, you've accused the West of defending Stalin's borders. As you know, the Helsinki Final Act and the principles say it must be done peacefully and mutually.

Mr. GOBLE. That's right.

Chairman SMITH. What do you think the OSCE should be doing to address the whole issue of borders? How should we be looking at that now?

Obviously, the first thing to do in this terrible bloodletting is to stop the war and to end the human rights abuses.

But that larger question of changing borders, you mentioned seven different regions or republics are negotiating right now? How should that be done within the framework of the OSCE?

Mr. GOBLE. It would be a wonderful thing if there were no linkage between the borders on a map and the status of human rights. It is unfortunately the case that there often is a linkage.

The borders in the former Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia were drawn with the explicit purpose of exacerbating ethnic tensions and creating them where they did not previously exist, by creating local minorities, local majorities, and then dependent relationships. And these borders were intended to make the emergence of a liberal society impossible.

The borders that we see around the world are all, in some ways, artificial. And then people say, "Well, if they're all artificial, then why talk about any of them?" That's the usual argument. Let me suggest that some borders are, nonetheless, to paraphrase Orwell, more artificial than others.

And that the argument about stability of borders, we heard, you will recall, in 1990 and 1991 with regard to the Baltic countries, with regard to the non-Baltic Republics of the former Soviet Union, with regard to the republics of the former Yugoslavia.

Then the view was that the only borders that we were going to accept, ultimately, were the borders of the Union Republics in these two countries. I would remind you that there are peoples far more numerous who only got autonomous status under Stalin.

It is an interesting question, morally and politically, whether the fact that Stalin drew particular borders and decided somebody got to be a union republic and somebody else didn't, should necessarily be the basis of continuing them for all time.

I definitely believe in peaceful change. I do not want war. I want the Russian aggression here stopped. But let us also not kid ourselves. This is Russian aggression against a population. The Chechens did not start firing against the Russians.

The newspapers here talk about the Chechen rebels or bandits or whatever. The fact is, there was a peaceful population that said, "We want to be independent; we want to negotiate a relationship." The Russians refused to negotiate. And they sent in force. It is not the Chechens who are challenging the Helsinki rules. It is the Russians who are challenging them.

I believe that the ultimate redress for a community which is under such attack must be some presumption that it has some claim to leaving. I believe that, because I believe that if you do not allow that as an ultimate exit, hopefully a minimal number of cases, but as an ultimate exit, you will in effect be giving carte blanche to central government to do things like unfortunately the President said the other day, "It's your internal affair. We hope you can end it with minimal carnage."

Forgive me, but I don't think anybody who believes in the Helsinki Final Act wants to be left in that position. We want to be for the protection of human rights. It is far more important that human rights be protected than the lines on a map drawn by a dictator be maintained.

That is not to say that all borders should be changed. But it is to say that this is an algebra: if you don't allow borders to be changed, you will affect the way political and military authorities will deal with minority populations in the absence of other means of intervention.

Now, where other means of intervention are possible, and I hope that now that the CSCE can play a role. But I think there will be occasions where that isn't possible. And I think we have to be very clear that it is the protection of human rights we are concerned about in the first instance.

If that can only be achieved by a border change, then it seems to me the international community should back those who want such a border change. I think to be in any other position, unfortunately given the human condition, is to encourage people who will use violence against minority populations.

There's too much historical evidence pointing in that direction.

Dr. FAIRBANKS. The issue of borders is an enormous problem. I agree with Paul that human rights are more important than borders. And some of these borders are completely unnatural, not only ethnographically, but geographically.

And just this once I will say that, sometime in the next 1,000 years, they are bound to be changed. But I think that the responsible policy for Americans is to try to avoid the topic of borders as much as possible. Because whichever of these republics and ethnic groups will become a true independent state depends decisively on their internal development, on democracy and economic reform and things like that.

It doesn't depend on international conferences or treaties. And I would urge that, to the extent possible, we try to postpone the question of borders until we know which of these communities are actually able to develop a kind of communal life that's viable and which aren't.

But at the same time, we can't allow a communal life to be snuffed out by bombing, as is being done right at the moment.

Chairman SMITH. Are there other republics that you have identified which could very quickly, or in the near or even medium term, fall into the same situation that Chechnya has fallen into where the Russians may use force to crush a move toward independence or sovereignty?

Mr. GOBLE. Which ones go and how fast will be a function of how the Chechen crisis, itself, is resolved.

If the Russians continue to press into Grozny, then I promise you this conflict will spread across the North Caucasus from Dagestan in the east to the regions of Karachai and Cherkess and Stavropol Krai in the west and to Abkhazia.

And there will be violence, attacks, as I said, on pipelines. And I would agree with Charles that pipelines matter greatly about what the Russians are doing, but I'm not sure I agree that the major reason that Chechens are fighting is to get the bribes from the pipelines.

But never mind. That was the first place, if the Russians occupy Grozny. And it is my belief that that is why they have not gone the whole way in Grozny just yet. Because they have been told by the Chechens, that until Grozny falls, the Chechens will not engage in terrorism. They would just undercut their case. But once Grozny goes, they will have to use the weapon of the weak. So, that's the first, the North Caucasian barrier, if you will.

The second place where there is a very real possibility of violence is an area that I never thought would reappear anywhere; Idel-Ural, the region between the Volga River and the Ural Mountains embracing the Tatars, the Bashkirs, the Mordvins, the Mari-El Udmurt and Chuvash Republics.

These people got together and sent the letter to Yeltsin last Thursday as I mentioned earlier. There already are, in several of these republics, heavily armed formations.

In the case of Chuvashia, there is one unit that numbers 1,500 men and has a professional military structure. If they feel that they are being pushed to the wall after Chechnya, the possibility of violence there is very real. And the possibility of terrorism against pipelines is very real because the pipelines linking the West Siberian fields and European Russia go through this region.

And I would commend to your attention and to others a wonderful novel written many years ago by Edward Topol, a Russian Jewish emigre, called *Red Snow* which posited that a small ethnic group would bring down Soviet power by blowing up pipelines. I hope it's not being used as a model. Fortunately, there's no Soviet power to be brought down anymore. That is the second place.

The third possibility, and which in some ways is even more frightening, is in Russian regions—and I agree with Charles' statements about the weakness and the lack of integral quality of the Russian Government. There is a very real possibility of the loss of central control over important military units.

You could see them making deals with Russian regions. This is already happening in the Trans-Baikal and in the Russian Far East. And the possibility that Russian military commanders in a particular region might use force against other people is a spillover of this, a reflection both of the weakness of the Russian state and the policy of the Yeltsin coterie that has started this awful disaster war in Chechnya. If that happens, then the possibilities of violence are not restricted to these two major non-Russian, ethnic areas, but could go much more broadly.

So, that is what makes settling this quickly so terribly important and what makes the terms of settlement so critical. Because you don't want those things to happen.

Calling it an internal affair won't be enough either. Thank you, sir.

Chairman SMITH. Thank you. Dr. Fairbanks?

Dr. FAIRBANKS. I know less about Tatarstan, Tuva, and so forth than Mr. Goble. I'm less concerned about those cases within Russia, perhaps ignorantly than the ethnic and border issues between Russia and two of its neighbors, Ukraine and Kazakhstan.

If this policy of people like Grachev and Stepashin of expanding Russian power goes forward, it might very well be used in Northern Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan is half Russian. And one could really have a dreadful situation there. Ukraine, I think, is less likely, but altogether possible. All these areas are exceedingly unstable.

Mr. GOBLE. Could I add to that, because I had restricted my comments to the Russian Federation since I hoped that, at least most Russians understand that Kazakhstan and Ukraine are now independent countries. Unfortunately, some people in Washington do not yet make that assumption.

I think that Northern Kazakhstan is an even greater threat of real violence. I agree with Charles on that. I would put that in a slightly different category. If that happens, then the potential for things going everywhere becomes very real.

I think that's much more dangerous than the Middle Volga. Although the reason I said Idel-Ural is because if you draw its borders the way the Tatars do today and did in the 1920's, you get down to the border with Kazakhstan which could precipitate this Northern Kazakhstan thing.

In addition, it should be noted that once again on the critical issue of Russia getting involved with ethnic Russians abroad, the Government of the United States has a sad record.

Tragically, in January of last year, the U.S. President in Moscow drew an explicit analogy between Russia's right to defend ethnic Russians abroad with America's right to defend American citizens abroad.

Of the 25.4 million ethnic Russians abroad, only 200,000 are citizens of the Russian Federation. States do have a right to protect their citizens abroad. But to suggest that a government has a right to protect somebody it defines as its fellow ethnic is to lead us down a road which we saw a Central European leader followed in the 1930's and 1940's.

I think it was tragic that that statement was made. And I think it's even worse that it has not been publicly retracted at the same level, because that has, unfortunately, led many people to conclude, just as the statements about Chechnya as an internal affair, that somehow that is a line which we wouldn't care too much about if it were crossed.

I want to add another case from the Russian Federation, Tuva. I hope Tuva goes too. Tuva is one of my favorite places, known to stamp collectors around the world, great stamps. Thank you, sir.

Chairman SMITH. Just let me add to that. I think that excuse was also used by Milosevic with regards to ethnic Serbs.

Mr. GOBLE. It is very important what we say because people actually pay attention to us. That's frightening sometimes, but it's an important thing to learn.

Chairman SMITH. Let me ask two final questions and ask Mr. Royce if he has any additional questions.

Was President Dudayev always popular among the Chechens? And what is your opinion about this President? Also, since there seems to be this sense that Chernomyrdin is different from Boris Yeltsin, is this part of a ruse? Is it true? Is it good cop/bad cop? Duplicity could be abounding here, and we've got to be very, very alert to that possibility. Mr. Goble.

Mr. GOBLE. Easy—Dzhokar Dudayev, for me, is not a thug. He is a man who behaved with incredible honor and distinction in Estonia in 1990–1991 protecting democratic institutions.

Moreover, his behavior in Chechnya in recent weeks, allowing Russian parents to take their children back, behaving in a dignified way according to the rules of war, in ways that tragically the Russian side has not behaved.

I give him many pluses. Unfortunately, just as I don't think we should decide that Boris Yeltsin is one thing now and forever, I don't think we should see that Dudayev is a man without shadows. He has around him many people who are very troubling, and he has done some things which one could not approve of.

Six months ago, Dzhokar Dudayev would probably have lost an up or down election. Because he had said, "We're going to get out. We're going to have independence." And it didn't happen. I think right now, as I think I said in my testimony, and certainly it's in my written testimony, Dzhokar Dudayev would get 95 percent of the vote plus.

Mr. Yeltsin has provided the best election support that Mr. Dudayev could have had. Now the idea that in an up or down vote anyone could displace Dudayev is absurd. It simply isn't going to happen. And if it does happen, it will mean that there is manipulation.

With respect to Chernomyrdin, I would not focus on him alone. I think there's a wide spectrum of people who behave differently at different times. I think Chernomyrdin is behaving in a more responsible way than Yeltsin.

There are a number of others too; a number of generals who have spoken out too, let us not forget. Some of them with good backgrounds. Some of them with ugly backgrounds.

Again, we're dealing with a policy-specific issue. That's how we should evaluate people, rather than deciding that now Chernomyrdin has done the right thing on this 1 day on Chechnya, that Chernomyrdin is our new hero, or that Yeltsin is now forever damned because of Chechnya. Or that the Russian people having voted for Zhirinovskiy are forever imperialists.

Or that having now spoken out against the war in Chechnya, that they'll never be in favor of the expansion of Russian power. I think there's a tendency to want to fix things, to say that whatever we see can be extrapolated forever with individuals and with peoples. History suggests that isn't adequate.

But I think Chernomyrdin, on this issue, has behaved much better. And I think one of the reasons for it, Charles Fairbanks has underlined, is the oil. I think he knows, as somebody who runs the government, what it will mean if those pipelines start being punctured.

Chairman SMITH. Dr. Fairbanks.

Dr. FAIRBANKS. I would agree with that. And I would say if we do have an opportunity to choose interlocutors and choose people that we try to punish to the extent we can, which is what I would recommend, it's not a division between democrats and nationalists or between the army and other people. Most elements in the army were very responsible. Even Primakov, who is the head of the foreign wing of the old KGB, seems to have been cautious about this adventure. The people who are for it are the very worst of the worst, one can say.

Chairman SMITH. Mr. Royce.

Mr. ROYCE. Yes. Let's go back to a question with Dr. Goble speaking of election support. What good is supporting the NED while winking at the subversion of an election where power is transferred to the executive or power is transferred to the center?

There have been these published allegations that there was fraud. And it was shrugged off by election observers, I guess, in the interest of diplomacy? Could I have your observations?

Mr. GOBLE. We wanted Yeltsin to have a strong presidency because some people had the queer notion that, if we only had a dictator, he could implement democracy. I think that's perverse. I think it was wrong.

I would not ask the question quite the way you do. I think NED has done some good things. I think winking at the misbehavior of the Russians on elections, the misbehavior of the Russians with respect to minorities, the misbehavior of the Russians with respect to expelling people from the capital city by skin color, is wrong.

I think the fact that we have not said it is wrong has undercut our ability to influence people through NED and other things, through the radios. I think that we want to combine in those two things. We shouldn't say, "Because we have NED, we have to wink at what they do. Because we have one set of relationships, we have to agree to everything they want to do."

It is terribly important for stability in Europe and, more broadly, that the United States and Russia should talk to each other about a wide variety of things. But I think the talking can only be based, realistically, on our being able to say, "This is where we agree. And this is where we don't agree. And if you behave in certain ways, you cannot expect the kind of integration that you hope for and that we would like to see."

It is appalling that American officials have been unwilling to say very publicly, and with regard to the Russians it has to be in public to be taken seriously, and it has to be by a senior official to be taken seriously—this business of expelling people by skin color.

I believe that one of the reasons that Chechnya was targeted was because there was an assumption Moscow could get away with it on the basis of the failure of the West to say anything in October 1993, on the basis of the failure to stand up to the Serbs who have enjoyed Russian protection and international bodies in their aggression in Bosnia.

And I think that we should be pushing NED, but we should also be demanding honest accounting of what's going on and that we should publicly indicate where there are problems.

I somehow think that, if there were a language test for ethnic Russians in Latvia, let us say, that that would not be considered an internal affair of Latvia for 2 seconds by the American Government or by OSCE. I mean, the High Commissioner for national minorities would be in there in a minute. Where's he been in Chechnya? This is the problem.

Obviously, the Russians have concluded that with 45 thousand nuclear warheads, you can't be wrong. I think that's the wrong message for them to take away with us. And I think that if we hope Russia will change and integrate into the West, we have got to speak up. But that doesn't mean that the NED things and the radio broadcasts, and the work with journalists hasn't helped.

We have to consider where this place was 10 years ago. I think it's remarkable that so many Russians are speaking out. And I think that's the kind of thing we should be supporting.

There are ways to send the message that you like that. But you can do that while denouncing the Russian Government for what it's doing.

Mr. ROYCE. Well, during the Weimar Republic, many Germans spoke out. But the difficulty here is where our policy is headed, or where Russia is headed. But in any event, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman SMITH. Before I adjourn, next week we expect to have Jim Collins, who is the point person for the administration on Russia and the CIS, or perhaps Strobe Talbot. I have been in contact, as well as staff. We have also invited the Russians to send one of their representatives.

If I were the administration and you had a question you might pose to me, what would that question be? Mr. Goble and Dr. Fairbanks.

Dr. FAIRBANKS. My questions would be, "What are you doing in your current policy toward Russia to deal with the extreme weakness of the Russian central government? Is that a fact about Russia that you acknowledge? And if so, how is your policy shaped by that fact?" Those are the questions I would ask.

Mr. GOBLE. And I would ask a follow-on to that question. "How prepared are you to see the reemergence of an authoritarian Russian state because you are so afraid of the consequences of the disintegration of the central authorities of Russia?"

How do you balance our interests in having a central Russian Government that is capable of controlling nuclear weapons and other things and talking to us with the need to have a Russian Government that plays by the international rules of the game?

What do you see as the proper balance, and where do you see that balance heading over the next year?"

Chairman SMITH. I thank you. Those two questions will be asked next week. And, having said that, this meeting is adjourned.

[Whereupon, the proceedings were adjourned at 4:50 p.m.]

## U.S. POLICY REGARDING RUSSIA'S ACTIONS IN CHECHNYA

---

FRIDAY, JANUARY 27, 1995

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE  
WASHINGTON, DC.

The hearing was held in room 2255, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC, at 10:19 a.m., Hon. Christopher H. Smith (Chairman), presiding.

*Commission Members Present:* Hon. Christopher H. Smith, Chairman; Hon. Alfonse D'Amato, Co-Chairman; Hon. Steny H. Hoyer; and Hon. Frank R. Wolf.

*House Members Present:* Hon. Tony Hall and Hon. Matt Salmon.

### OPENING STATEMENTS

Co-Chairman D'AMATO. I am going to go ahead without the benefit of the Chairman's presence, and what I am going to do is forego my opening statement so that when he does come, he will be in a position to make his opening statement. Now we can take testimony from Mr. Collins, who is the Senior Coordinator, Office of the Ambassador-at-Large for the New Independent States, and he is the senior policy official of the U.S. Government available to testify before the Commission on the critical situation that exists.

I am going to call upon our other members who I know have time constraints to offer their opening statements. I know Congressman Wolf has something that he wants to do in relation to referencing a communique he has sent to the administration. So why don't I call on Congressman Wolf at this point?

Mr. WOLF. Thank you, Senator. I appreciate it very much.

Mr. Collins, I welcome you, and the only thing I will do is just read a letter that I sent to the President yesterday. I tried to call the White House a couple of times, and nobody called back in, not because they did not want to, but they were busy.

But it says:

Dear Mr. President,

The brutal conflict in Chechnya is now in its second month. Gruesome images of the fighting emerge day after day. Thousands of Chechens have died in the fighting, including many innocent women and children.

While the U.S. position has been that this is an internal Russian affair, the American people certainly have an interest in bringing an end to the fighting. Besides the obvious

human tragedy occurring as men and women and children continue to die, Russia is a major recipient of U.S. foreign aid. This war is causing many in the Congress to consider whether Russia is deserving of such aid and whether the entire United States-Russian relationship should be reexamined, particularly our close ties to President Yeltsin.

Continuation of this conflict will have major implications for the future of the Yeltsin government, the Russian economy, and Russia's already fragile relationship with its neighbors. I believe our Government should use its diplomatic leverage now to help bring peace to the region.

And this is the important part.

I am writing to propose that you appoint former President George Bush or possibly former Secretary of State James Baker as a special emissary for this purpose, to go to Moscow, meet with President Yeltsin, and, frankly, meet with President Yeltsin as an equal because you can't have an Assistant Secretary going to meet with Yeltsin, and other Russian leaders to present your viewpoint, that is, the viewpoint of the Clinton administration, on the importance of quickly ending the conflict. I believe that President Bush could be very helpful in ending the fighting and stopping the killing.

Mr. President, I hope you will give careful consideration to this proposal and move quickly in sending an emissary to Russia because the support for Russian aid is unraveling in this Congress as we now speak. You look at the gruesome details of the killings of women and children and the elderly men and women. This thing will continue. This thing will probably become like Afghanistan, and frankly, I think you need somebody of the credibility of former President Bush or perhaps Secretary James Baker to go over there and on a good relationship basis and meet with Mr. Yeltsin and begin to make our position clear.

And that is my opening statement. I submit that for the record, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman SMITH. Thank you very, very much, Mr. Wolf.

First of all, I want to apologize to Mr. Collins and all assembled for being late. We have a mark-up on H.R. 7 going on in the International Relations Committee, and I am chair of one of the subcommittees that deals with peacekeeping. So if I do have to leave as this hearing progresses, it will be because of votes on amendments offered in that mark-up.

I want to thank Al D'Amato, Co-Chairman of the Commission, for convening this hearing.

Ladies and gentlemen, I want to thank all of you for attending this second installment of the Commission's hearing on Chechnya, the first part having taken place last Thursday.

At that time, our expert witnesses discussed the origins, the course, and the ramifications of this conflict. They prognosticated about the likely developments and analyzed U.S. interests in this crisis.

Finally, our witnesses were largely very critical of United States policy to date, focusing especially on this administration's position that the war in Chechnya is an internal affair of the Russian Federation, and they offered advice about our policy options at this point.

Considering the nature of their testimony and the obvious importance of this subject, the Helsinki Commission has invited the administration's Senior Coordinator for U.S. Policy and the New Independent States to explain U.S. perspective, to amplify on official statements made to date, and to respond to the criticisms that have been leveled in many other fora and op-ed pages around the country.

I would like to point out that the Commission invited the Russian Embassy to send a representative to testify, as well, but they declined to participate in this hearing.

Since our last hearing, I am afraid to say that things have begun to look even more grim in this troubled area. Sergei Kovalev, the Chairman of President Yeltsin's Human Rights Commission, has been savagely attacked by the Defense Minister Grachev, whom many have blamed for this military debacle. Kovalev, a close associate of Andrei Sakharov, has devoted his entire life, including years spent in the Gulag, to human rights, but yet Grachev has called him a traitor to Russia.

A few days ago members of the Communist nationalist factions in the parliament also blessed Kovalev for his alleged lack of patriotism. Moreover, the intimidation of the mass media whose performance has been one of the few consolations in this sickening tragedy is growing.

Alexander Korzhakov, President Yeltsin's chief bodyguard and influential advisor, openly threatened the head of the independent television network who reportedly is afraid to return to Russia from outside the country.

Meanwhile President Yeltsin has made it plain that he will not talk with General Dudaev, and news reports indicate that Russian military forces are attacking towns and villages around Grozny. The city itself is practically demolished, and it looks like Boris Yeltsin's government is prepared to raze it and surrounding regions to the ground.

Some of you probably saw a page one story in The New York Times today by Michael Specter, who spoke of how Russian troops are summarily executing, looting and killing in a brutalistic attack upon civilians and anyone they even think could tote a gun.

In sum, the prospects of a negotiated settlement today appear dismal, despite international public opinion and the imminent arrival of a team of OSCE observers in the region. Moscow has declared the military operation over, and what remains to be done is described as a police action, but most analysts, including some of the best known democratic reformers in Moscow, expect a guerrilla war with the possible participation of Caucasian peoples other than the Chechens.

Many fear protracted hostilities could stifle democratization in Russia altogether. In these circumstances, it is critical for Congress to hear a clear explanation of the administration's view of the war, its antecedents, the situation on the ground today and the near future, and its likely impact on Russia's future domestic and foreign policies, as well as the U.S. leverage and policy options.

Our witness is eminently qualified to offer that perspective. James Collins is the Senior Coordinator at the Office of the Ambassador-at-Large for the New Independent States at the Department of State. A

career Foreign Service officer, Mr. Collins is one of the most knowledgeable experts in the U.S. Government on Russia and the former Soviet Union.

Before taking up his present position, he was Deputy Chief of Mission in Moscow from 1990 to 1993.

We thank him for coming and look forward to his testimony. During the question and answer period, we will ask him not only about Chechnya, but about other disturbing developments on the territory of the former Soviet Union.

Mr. Hall, I thank you for being here as well, but I would like to yield first to our distinguished Ranking Member Mr. Hoyer for any opening comments he might like to make.

Mr. HOYER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate this opportunity to be with you.

I apologize for just being a couple of minutes late, as I guess all of us were because of the vote.

In his testimony, Mr. Chairman, to the seriousness of the subject that this is the second Helsinki Commission hearing in as many weeks on Chechnya, over the years we have only treated genuine crises like Yugoslavia in this manner. I would suggest that this is a genuine crisis.

With our hopes of reform in Russia now threatened by this misconceived war in Chechnya, it is clearly a genuine crisis that we confront. For that reason, I am pleased to welcome our distinguished witness, Jim Collins, whom the Helsinki Commission has known for many years.

I well remember his insightful briefings in the U.S.S.R., in the Embassy in Moscow in November 1988 when Mikhail Gorbachev was in power, and we in Congress were still trying to grasp the ramifications of glasnost and perestroika for the U.S.S.R. and for the world.

Last May Jim Collins testified before the Commission on the subject of Russia's relations with its neighbors. Other witnesses at that time voiced great concern over Russia's meddling in the affairs of neighboring states. The administration view was that spheres of influence are unacceptable in the modern world, and that the United States was committed to the independence of all the former Soviet republics.

Today unfortunately Mr. Collins testifies before the Commission at a very troubling moment. The war in Chechnya could undo the great strides made toward democratization in Russia, and if Chechnya were not bad enough, there are warring trends in Russia's relations with its other neighbors.

Of particular note is Kazakhstan, which under Moscow's pressure seems to be sliding back into some sort of military union with Russia. Kazakhstan has also undertaken a pipeline construction project, I understand, to the Caspian Sea, together with Russia and Oman, while shutting out the Chevron Oil Company, which has sunk huge sums at the instance of our Government and at the instance of Russia and Kazakhstan. In general, I am struck by a consistent Russian campaign to control the natural resources and outlets to transportation routes of neighboring countries.

Does the administration, I would ask, detect the same pattern, and if so, what are we prepared to do about it?

Perhaps things in Russia can yet work out well. We, of course, hope so, but frankly, we are hard pressed to find reasons for optimism today. Still, if you cannot work up any optimism, maybe we can find cause for hope. Jim Collins is one of the real experts on Russia in our country and one of the most sensitive observers of developments in that country.

And, Mr. Chairman, I congratulate you for inviting him here to discuss not just the issue of Chechnya, which gives us all great concern as we see civilians ravaged by an invading army, outside of the ambit of the issue of self-determination, a complicated one at best. The ravaging of civilian populations and the indiscriminate bombing and attacks clearly are contrary to international morals, clearly unacceptable to the international community, and clearly violative of the human rights concerns and the Helsinki Final Act.

Mr. Chairman, I again congratulate you for this hearing and am pleased to join with you, my very good friend and someone who has been as steadfast in support of the Helsinki principles and the Helsinki process and, as importantly from my personal perspective, of this Commission as anybody in the Congress or in the United States, my good friend Senator D'Amato.

Chairman SMITH. I mistakenly did not introduce Co-Chairman D'Amato earlier. I had thought that he opened the hearing with his statement. If you wish to proceed with an opening statement, please proceed.

Co-Chairman D'AMATO. Mr. Chairman, in the interest of time, I am going to ask that my statement be included in the record in its entirety because I would like to hear from Mr. Collins.

[The prepared statement of Senator D'Amato has been placed in the appendix.]

I will make one observation, that what is taking place in Chechnya today and its ensuing consequences, have all of the earmarks of a great tragedy, a great tragedy, that will not be confined just to Chechnya. I think it has ramifications both of my colleagues, Congressman Smith and Congressman Hoyer, have alluded to. I think the Russians have themselves in a very, very precarious position. There will be no military victory there. There can be maybe an occupation with a dreadful consequence not only as it relates to Chechnya, but in terms of what will take place in the spreading of this fight for freedom, and it seems to me that there had better be a major diplomatic effort to stop it, major.

In the sense of the comments by Congressman Wolf, this has got to be handled at the highest levels because the ramifications are not good for the United States, or for freedom. I think it could plunge us into another era in which we begin to view each other with great hostility, fear, and trepidation. I do not believe for a moment that this conflict is going to be confined to this area of the world, unless something is done and unless an agreement is reached based on principles of human rights and some kind of independence, structured independence, for the people of Chechnya I have not seen the kind of interest that the administration, it seems to me, should be paying in achieving this goal.

I am not making a political speech on the floor of the Senate. I think this problem is much more complex than one that can be solved by just simply cutting off Russian aid, but at some point in time, that issue will be minor in comparison to where we find ourselves. I have to tell you that.

So we had better bring this up to the kind of diplomatic effort necessary to suggest to the Russians the kinds of actions that they have to begin to undertake.

It may be too late. We have posed the question of whether or not there is some kind of possible diplomatic solution in Chechnya. I still do not know, and I have done what I did not want to do. I took too much time.

Chairman SMITH. Thank you for your fine comments, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to yield to Mr. Hall, who is the unquestioned leader of hunger and humanitarian concerns in the Congress for many, many years.

Mr. Hall of Ohio.

Mr. HALL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I do not have a written statement. I am just glad to be invited to sit in on this and listen to the testimony. I look forward to the questions.

And I appreciate the work of this Commission and the direction you have been going in in your fight on human rights for several years.

Thank you.

Chairman SMITH. I thank you, Mr. Hall.

Mr. Collins.

**TESTIMONY OF MR. JAMES COLLINS,  
SENIOR COORDINATOR, OFFICE OF THE AMBASSADOR-  
AT-LARGE FOR THE NEW INDEPENDENT STATES**

Mr. COLLINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission.

I do want to say that one of the most important things I think I was able to do in Moscow was to maintain a good relationship with this body. It has always had a critical role really in our relationship with that part of the world, and I take some pride in the fact that the Commission has long done very good work in standing up for precisely the kind of principles that I think are most important to defend.

I have submitted a written statement, and I would simply like to summarize briefly because I would like to get to the questioning, I think, quickly.

[The prepared statement of James Collins has been placed in the appendix.]

Mr. Chairman, Chechnya represents an enormous human tragedy and a challenge to the transition of Russia to democracy. Events there are exerting negative pressures on the process of democratic and market reform in Russia and on Russia's standing in the world.

As Secretary Christopher said of Chechnya last week at Harvard University, the way Russia has used military force there has been excessive, and it threatens to have a corrosive effect on the future of Russian democracy.

Yet even in the midst of this awful situation, there are some encouraging signs. The ability of the Russian people, parliament, media to express their opinions effectively and openly. Opinions deeply critical of Chechnya and of the operation there show that some critical elements of democracy and civil society are taking root.

Our policy toward Chechnya really from the outset has rested on three principles, principles that are grounded firmly, we believe, in the documents and program that have flowed from Helsinki.

First, the idea and concept of respect for the principle that international borders may be changed only through mutual consent and the preservation of the territory and integrity of the Russian Federation.

Our belief that all involved, second, have an obligation to observe OSCE principles, including with respect to human rights, and to pursue a peaceful solution to disputes.

Third, our conviction that it is in the interest of Russia and all parties concerned to engage OSCE and other humanitarian institutions to assist in promoting the observance of human rights in relieving suffering and ultimately, and most importantly, in ending this conflict and promoting democracy.

Since the start of the conflict we have conducted a continuous dialog with Russian officials and concerned citizens. These contacts have included communications between the President and Vice President and Russia's leaders, including President Yeltsin.

Recent discussions in Geneva between Secretary Christopher and Foreign Minister Kozyrev have continued a longer dialog, and regular contacts between our Ambassador in Moscow and a range of Russian officials, private citizens, and legislators have been a part of that dialog.

Our message in all of this has been, I think, clear. The cessation of violence and a resolution of this conflict through political peaceful means is in the critical interest of Russian and Russian reform. We've also made clear it's in the U.S. interest.

We have also emphasized to the Russian leadership that continued violence and bloodshed in Chechnya can endanger Russia's developing relations with the West. We have encouraged Russian officials to cooperate with international organizations and humanitarian relief agencies to ameliorate human suffering and assist in ending this conflict.

We welcome the Russian Government's decision to invite an OSC rapporteur mission and assist in its travel to the region. We expect this mission to be given access to necessary places and people in order to listen carefully to a wide cross-section of those involved in the situation and to look for ways to help them find both short-term relief and a long-term solution to the problems that led to the current crisis.

Chechnya represents a serious setback for reform, but the depth of that setback and the amount of time necessary to recover from it are still open questions in my view. Some see Chechnya as proof that reform has failed in Russia. We think it's early to make that kind of conclusion.

There can be no question that Chechnya has divided supporters of reform and eroded political backing for its advocates. Nevertheless, recent actions supporting privatization and the Duma's passage of the 1995 budget indicate continuing commitment among many to market reform, and the extent to which freedom of speech and free media are strong forces today is one encouraging development.

So long as this hope for reform continues, we have a vital interest in supporting it and its advocates as best we can. This is the objective of our assistance program. We seek to support a set of principles and a process, not a particular government or group of individuals. Those principles include respect for internationally recognized human rights, promotion of the rule of law and individual freedoms, and respect for the international obligations embodied in the Helsinki Final Act and OSCE documents.

Our assistance seeks to encourage democratization in the development of a civil society and the rule of law and movement toward a private market economy. As Russia enters a time of decision in its reform path, this assistance will be needed more than ever.

President Clinton stated our position clearly in Cleveland on January 13. He deplored the horror of the bloodshed in Chechnya and stated that we have a tremendous stake in the success of Russia's efforts to become a stable, democratic nation. That is why the United States will not waiver from our course; patient, responsible support for Russian reform. If the forces of reform are embattled, we must not retreat from our support for them.

Mr. Chairman, I do look forward to discussing these issues with you and the Commission. We share your deep concerns about the events in Chechnya, their impact on the evolution of reform in Russia, but I believe we must try to find ways and to do everything we can to help insure that reform survives and prospers. We do not want to see a Russia isolated from the international community. The Russian transition is still underway. It's in our interest to do everything we can to promote it and direct it in the best possible direction.

Thank you very much.

Co-Chairman D'AMATO. I am going to call upon my good friend and former Chairman to raise whatever questions he has. I am going to have to leave here at about 20 minutes after 11. So I want to give the members an opportunity to pose their questions first.

Mr. HOYER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

One of the questions we discussed at our last hearing last week, as you may have heard, is, first of all, the central control that exists, in Moscow at this point, particularly as it relates to President Yeltsin, as it relates to the direction of the conflict or the assault on Chechnya.

Do we believe or is it our analysis that President Yeltsin is, in fact, in charge? Was this his initiative? Was it prosecuted consistent with his policies, and is it being negotiated through President Yeltsin?

Mr. COLLINS. I think the short answer to the question is, yes, we do believe he is in charge, and indeed, we have been so directly told.

But I would say it is also a fact that he is the elected President of the Russian Federation. These events are occurring while he is the President of the Russian Federation, and therefore, ultimately he holds responsibility for the conduct of policy, the conduct of these operations.

I think there simply is no question that we view that as the reality, and we believe that despite many of the rumors and many of the suggestions that he is somehow not in charge, that the operating assumption we work on and we believe the right one is that he is the President, and he is responsible, and he is the man who is directing the government.

Mr. HOYER. I accept the premise that under the Russian Constitution he is responsible presumably. Clearly the timeframe in which President Yeltsin said the conflict had stopped, clearly it had not on the ground. The assault was still continuing.

Now, obviously that could happen in any country—the difference between Moscow's central government and Washington's central government once on the ground in some other place in the world, and while we assume that, and that's our premise and that is the legal status, you may not want to disclose this in an open hearing, but your answer was very careful as I would expect from a diplomat.

I agree with the President's statement that he made in Cleveland. Clearly, that is in our best interest. It is in Russia's best interest and in the world's best interest to have a stable leadership in Russia. On the other hand, if we have the military having taken over with a titular civilian head, President Yeltsin, we need to act accordingly.

What you are telling me and this Commission is that that is not the case from our perspective. We do not believe that is the situation on the ground.

Mr. COLLINS. That is correct, Mr. Hoyer.

Mr. HOYER. We have news reports this morning that the Russian military did not allow Sergei Kovalev to accompany the OSCE Mission, and I think you were with me when we met with him.

Mr. COLLINS. Yes, I know Mr. Kovalev very well and have much respect for him.

Mr. HOYER. He is of the heroes, in my opinion, in the human rights movement in the Soviet Union and now in Russia.

We are told that he was not allowed to travel to Chechnya with the OCSC delegation. Do you have information on that?

Mr. COLLINS. Well, that is our understanding as well. We understand that the Commission's aircraft took off at some point today Moscow time, which is several hours ago, that Mr. Kovalev was not permitted to accompany the OSCE mission. I don't have further details beyond that. I would only say, and I would like it for the record, that Mr. Kovalev is one of the great assets of Russian democracy and democratization, in my view, and he is a very courageous man. He is very controversial at the moment, and he is a bit proud of that, I think, and I do not know the details of what the pros or cons of this was.

At any rate, I think it is also important, however, that this mission went, that it is, I believe, on the ground in the region at this time, and we, you know, have basically supported that and will continue to press for an effective cooperation with the mission.

Now, we did, frankly, have Ambassador Pickering raise the question of Kovalev's accompanying with Mr. Ivanov, but I do not know—

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, I would suggest that the Commission raise this issue in a correspondence from Chairman Smith and yourself to both the State Department and to the Russian Embassy, of our concern that Mr. Kovalev, who as Mr. Collins has stated is one of the giants as it relates to human rights and who has shown a great deal of courage on the ground in Chechnya, just physical courage and political and intellectual courage in raising the issue with the Russian people and with the Russian Government as to what was being prosecuted by the central government in Chechnya, that he was not included in the OSCE delegation.

Mr. Collins is correct. It would have lent great credibility to the mission, I think, to have Mr. Kovalev included.

Last question. The Chairman is getting back, and you may not know this. On September 16, 1994, Senator DeConcini and I wrote to the President at the White House and raised the following question. And I'm guessing from that letter:

"Second, we are concerned about the fate of national minorities in Russia. In October 1993, thousands of people of Caucasian nationality were evicted from Moscow without the slightest judicial procedure. This initiative by the major of Moscow also targeted people including refugees from central Asia and dark-skinned individuals generally."

My concern, Mr. Collins, and I would call it to the attention of the Chairman, I am informed we have not received a response to this letter. I do not believe that is because there is disagreement with the questions we raised. It may be simply an administrative problem, but you might want to comment on that if you could.

Mr. COLLINS. I would be happy to, and I will get you a response to the letter. I was not aware that it had not been answered.

Mr. HOYER. It is my information we have not gotten a response.

Mr. COLLINS. Well, I will make sure that you do get one.

I might say a word about that. I was in Moscow during this, and it was seen by all of us at the time as a negative indicator, I guess, to put it mildly. It, of course, took place in the aftermath of fighting around the white house and dissolution of parliament and associated with a variety of different events.

But we took it seriously as a problem, frankly, of human rights. The discrimination and clear effort to single out groups and treat them differently with respect to residents in Moscow and so forth was exactly what it was, and we did raise this with the government at the time. In November Mr. Shattuck had a rather lengthy exchange with several officials associated with human rights and in the Foreign Ministry about our concerns about this subject.

President Yeltsin did approve a commission in October to look at the question broadly of the treatment concerning expulsions and mistreatment of minorities in Moscow. I am not aware of whether that commission ever issued a report or dealt with the issue.

In December we raised it again, this time with Mr. Kovalev actually, who as chairman of President Yeltsin's Human Rights Commission and the chairman of the committee in the Duma on human rights has, you know, official jurisdiction over the question, and they agreed that it needed to be investigated.

Now, I think, quite frankly, since then the broader issue of Chechnya has obviously overtaken this, but I simply would say to you that we recognized this as a problem and a bad indicator at the time it took place and something that needed to be addressed, and we have raised it. I do not think that we have had necessarily satisfactory response to this, but I simply want you to know that it was not ignored.

Mr. HOYER. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman SMITH. Due to time restraints on his schedule, I would like to recognize Mr. Wolf.

Mr. WOLF. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a 10:30 appointment with Mr. Slater, the Federal Highway Administrator, in my office, but I did want to ask you.

One, will you take this letter back?

And, two, if you could comment, do you think it makes sense? One, I think this administration could use some bipartisan support because I heard the President the other night in the State of the Union Message reaching out, good ideas. This has been one, I think, of the faults of the administration. When it was put together, there was some hope that it would reach out and bring in some Republicans in these type of issues that other administrations have in the past, and maybe they have not.

What are your personal feelings, and I will ask personal, of having somebody like either President Bush or Secretary Baker be a special emissary on a very fast track to do this?

Mr. COLLINS. Well, first of all, I knew of your letter. Someone briefed me on it last night, and I will be happy to take it back, and I will talk with Secretary Christopher about it and my colleagues in the White House.

I was asked this early on in this crisis, and it had to do with whether another former President might be in touch with Mr. Yeltsin about the human rights concerns and so forth, and my answer was this. I think it is clear that this crisis, and that was in early days and I would only say it is my greater conviction today, is something in which we have a maximum interest in finding a way to help the Russians out of a mess and the Chechens as well.

This is a horrible business going on. Everybody realizes it. I do not preclude any avenues, and I would like to talk to people in the administration about your idea. I mean whether it can be effective I just do not know personally.

Mr. WOLF. Well, President Carter was very effective in Haiti, and the reason I did not put President Carter in is because I think President Bush has a relationship with President Yeltsin, but if it is President Carter, I think that is fine, but I think you really have to do something, and frankly, had President Carter not have done what he did, and I commend him for it, who knows what would have taken place in Haiti?

I think that is enough. I will turn it back to the Chairman.

Mr. COLLINS. Well, I will take it back, and I will be happy to raise it, and we will get back to you further about it.

Mr. WOLF. OK. Thank you.

Co-Chairman D'AMATO. Congressman Hall.

Mr. HALL. Thank you, Senator.

Mr. Collins, we have always observed the territorial rights of our allies and friends for the most part in the world, but there have been examples where the government that we were involved with we were completely opposed to, and we got involved because of the human rights of the people, the tremendous denial of rights, the right to food and shelter, the right not to be tortured, the right to be accounted for.

Is there any kind of response coming from our country relative to humanitarian aid?

Mr. COLLINS. Yes, sir. Well, there are, I think, two aspects to it. We have received an appeal or the International Red Cross, which is very active in this region and has been working almost from the first days, has now issued an appeal according to its normal procedures. We are studying that, and it is my understanding we will be responding to that appeal with funding at an appropriate level, and that, frankly, is under discussion now.

Mr. HALL. The International Red Cross, are they being given access?

Mr. COLLINS. They are basically being given access is my understanding. I would say at the early stages of this there were some significant problems of access of humanitarian organizations to the region. We and others have been taking this up regularly with the Russian authorities, and I think it is our reporting at this time that the Red Cross, the International Organization Migration essentially are able to do the job as they see they should.

The Red Cross has had one complaint; they are not, in their view, being given the access they should be to prisoners in the region. The U.N. Commission on Refugees is also involved. They have for whatever reason had a more difficult time getting their assessment mission to get the access it wants.

We have also encouraged and pressed the Russian Government to allow these organizations to work.

Now, I believe there has also been a response from American organizations. AmeriCare I know is one, and I do not remember the name of the other at the moment, but they have been able to deliver medical supplies and humanitarian relief, as far as I know, without difficulty, and I can simply assure you that making sure these organizations can do their job and do it effectively has been a constant priority of our work with the Russian authorities.

Mr. HALL. In regard to the Red Cross, I did not quite understand what you said there. They do not have, at least as of right now, good access to the accounting of the prisoners that we know of.

Mr. COLLINS. My understanding is that they do not believe they have been given adequate access to the prisoners. Now, I do not know the details exactly of, you know, how broadly or how narrowly that is a problem, but I know that it is something they have raised with us, and we have raised it with the Russian Government.

Mr. HALL. What about food access and humanitarian access? Is the Red Cross just kind of monitoring the situation?

Mr. COLLINS. No, they are delivering services.

Mr. HALL. They are delivering?

Mr. COLLINS. And have been doing so really for several weeks.

Mr. HALL. In all parts of the country?

Mr. COLLINS. I would be happy to give you some detail on that if I could respond to you so that you have a complete picture, but my understanding is they have not been able to work directly in Grozny for most of this period, but they were allowed basically and were doing work outside where refugees and people fleeing the city were showing up, were able to work with them and to provide humanitarian assistance elsewhere in Chechnya.

Mr. HALL. Thank you, Mr. Collins.

Chairman SMITH. Mr. D'Amato.

Co-Chairman D'AMATO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Collins, I have to tell you that there are a number of areas that concern me. The question of the pipeline being built through Iran to Turkey, I would hope that this administration is very, very, very strong in denying any kind of international financing for this pipeline. I do not know if you care to comment on it.

I have to tell you that I think that we are not creating enough pressure. I see where the German Ministry of Economics says, and I quote: "If the Russian Government does not respect the principle we expect of them, Germany will not rule out economic sanctions."

I raise that because we have not yet reached a level where a significant number of Members of the Congress, in both the House and Senate, have reached that point, but I would suggest that the time is coming sooner rather than later when you will begin to hear this, and it will become a very dominant and prevailing, I think, call.

I think we are not going to be dissuaded by the arguments of the past, and I have never heard a more compelling argument for our speaking out than that given by Lech Walesa when he came to the Congress and said, "When we were fighting for freedom, you were telling us, in essence, to keep our mouth shut and don't rock the boat."

I think that we have exercised great restraint. I am going to exercise some restraint, but there will come a point I will join others and say, "Enough is enough."

I understand the argument about world peace. I also understand that we came to a point where we have a cessation of some of the open hostility that once existed, but I do not want this to become a facade and behind that facade have a reemergence of the totalitarian state that achieves dominance through the electoral process. It would be a sad occurrence if we were to delude ourselves into thinking we have achieved some wonderful goal and then, like the emperor who had no clothes, we would all cheer Russia for its wonderful suit of democracy only to see that the perception is not the reality.

So I leave that with you and tell you that is something that I share, and I know that there are a number of my colleagues who are becoming much more concerned with what we see taking place in Chechnya, which is, in essence, the Russians saying one thing but doing another. We are all talking love and peace so long as you give us your money, but we undertake another series of actions and we do not really live up to that goal of peace.

So I just leave that with you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman SMITH. Mr. Collins, do you wish to respond to that?

Mr. COLLINS. I would like to make a comment about assistance because I know it is an issue, and it is something that we are going to be talking about really for several months as we go through the cycle of hearings and discussion with the Congress about how we deal with this problem.

And what you identify, Senator, is, I think, the great dilemma. I would go back first to the Freedom Support Act, which I think was a bipartisan effort and has served really the interests of our government and our people well across the whole former Soviet Union. There are certain principles laid down in that act about what it is the assistance is supposed to do and what it is supposed to support, and we take those very seriously in fashioning and crafting the programs.

Now, you know, I am not here to say in any way, shape, or form that the assistance program is without any fault. So do not get me wrong, but I do believe very strongly that just as this assistance program was first developed in the Freedom Support Act with the work of both parties and the administration under the previous administration and just as we have funded it with you and you have been very generous in supporting these programs, we have done so because we have found the kinds of programs that really appear to support what we find in our interest.

Now, in general, I would say those things fall into three categories. One is what we are calling market reform. What I would say to you is that this really is another way of saying breaking up the old Soviet monopoly on all of the economic resources and so forth, and it is creating a private basis for economic activity which in the end is empowering individuals, peoples, concerns instead of government.

Now, I think that is in our interest, and I think it is in the interest broadly of what we have tried to do with Russia.

Secondly, we have, I think, supported programs aimed at empowering in the political process.

And, third, there has been, and I think it sort of combines the two really, an effort to promote what we call rule of law or essentially to create the basis of a civil society based on law rather than arbitrary power.

Now, those programs basically are not writing anybody a check. They tend to be consultants, and I think some people who have worked with the Commission have been involved in some of them. I think we have a great interest in those objectives, and as long as we can find people who are pursuing them, I think they deserve our support.

I understand the temptation or the sense that the assistance is somehow a tool that we can use with the government. Quite honestly, I must say that the bulk of this assistance is not going to government in the sense that I think, you know, people may understand that term. It is going essentially to private individuals, organizations, to local governments, to the legislatures. Some of it goes to help create legal codes or work with ministries, and so forth, but by and large, it has been directed at dismantling the communist system, and I think that is in our interest.

So I think as we talk about this, and I fully understand the view, that is the position I would take and the type of criteria I would hope we could use to determine what we should be doing.

Now, there is another side of assistance which has to do with, if you will, the dismantlement of the nuclear arsenal in a variety of programs. I think all of us realize that that is in our interest, the Russian's interest, the interest of all of our allies if we can continue it and make it work. It has shortcomings. God knows it has had problems, but the program essentially, as long as it is achieving its objectives, it seems to me, is very much in the interest of the American taxpayer and all of us here.

Now, what I am saying to you, I guess, is I know assistance is controversial, but we need, I hope, to discuss very fully where that assistance is going and what it is achieving before we make a decision about what to do with it.

Co-Chairman D'AMATO. Let me just add this caveat. I hope that we can get a comprehensive review of just how effective that assistance is, a review of its implementation. In other words, in the implementation, we are dealing with the program of dismantling nuclear weapons. How effective is it? I would be particularly interested in that.

I know that obviously there is a great deal of the money we are never going to be able to account for. In my 6 years on the Intelligence Committee I have been astounded at how little we have been able to get from a certain agency in terms of real intelligence. I hope that its capacity has improved so that at least we have a good monitoring or a better monitoring effort as it relates to how these dollars are being used. You might bring that to those folks.

I am no longer on that committee because I could read and learn more about what was happening in The New York Times than in their secret, comprehensive briefings.

On that note, I will turn to my friend and colleague Congressman Hoyer. [Laughter.]

Mr. HOYER. Thank you, Senator.

I am reminded of the comment that Tom Clancy, who is, by the way, my constituent.

Mr. COLLINS. I know that, and increasing wealthy constituent.

Mr. HOYER. Well, I am hoping he is reading about book deals and deciding he does not want to come to Congress. [Laughter.]

Some people have urged him to try to replace me in the Congress, but in any event I remember reading in his book, *Clear and Present Danger*, Senator, that there was a crisis in the world. Actually what everybody at NSA and CIA and DIA and State Department and other security agencies were doing was watching CNN to find out what was going on, and I think there is a lot of truth in that.

I want to observe he has not said that, but we have a new rule that precludes proxy voting. So the Chairman's going in and out is because the International Relations Committee has scheduled a mark-up at the same time we have this hearing.

Chairman SMITH. Thank you. I appreciate that.

First of all, let me begin by saying that this hearing was scheduled for today some time ago. For the record, the mark-up in the International Relations Committee was scheduled for yesterday. To accommodate the minority party, which asked for 1 day to look at the legislation in greater detail, the mark-up was held over until today. That is why I am running back and forth.

Mr. HOYER. Can we make it clear that that was not an unreasonable request to have 1 day to look at it?

Chairman SMITH. Not at all. Let me stay, Mr. Collins—

Mr. HOYER. We like to think it is sort of a human right to be able to read these before we vote.

Chairman SMITH. I am not touching that.

Mr. HOYER. No, I know. [Laughter.]

Chairman SMITH. Let's stay on the subject at hand. Thank you, members, for continuing this hearing, and, Mr. Collins, thank you for your testimony. I will look at its entirety when the record is ready.

At our last hearing, we heard some very, very critical testimony, as you know. I am sure you have reviewed the record of the statements that have been made by those who participated, and much of the criticism that has been leveled, especially the early and persistent categorization of this terrible thing as an "internal affair".

I would appreciate your informing this Commission whether or not you thought, however unwittingly, this perhaps gave the Russian military the green light to continue once it had started. Or had there been an outcry of outrage by the West—our European allies joined in as we all know with the chorus of saying this was an "internal affair"—might this terrible tragedy have been mitigated, perhaps nipped in the bud? Was it a green light, yes or no? Is it unreasonable to suggest that, in your view?

Mr. COLLINS. I have to say I do not think there is any basis really to say there should have been any perception of a green light on this issue. I have thought a lot about the first characterization of it as an internal affair, and I can tell you that what was meant by that characterization was essentially that we were proceeding on the principles I outlined in my brief statement, that Chechnya was an integral part of the Russian Federation. According to the principles of Helsinki and other documents,

you do not change borders by unilateral action, international borders, and therefore, this was, if you will, a domestic problem of the Russian Federation.

Now, that said, at no time did anyone suggest or even think that that meant somehow it was exempt from what after all from 1975 on has been a fundamental principle, which is that there are international standards and norms that states of the OSCE community have taken upon themselves as obligations. Those standards and norms obligate the states concerned to conduct their affairs according to certain human rights standards that are an integral part of that body of standards. It is also very clear that that means the issues in human rights, treatment of people, and so forth, are a subject that is rightfully and in an agreed way a subject for the international community's concern.

We made clear to the Russians quietly, that we thought this was a grave problem they were getting into. That we, admittedly did not try to do this in a major public way. We were concerned about the human rights. The Vice President made this clear when he was there. The Secretary made it clear, I think, even before the Vice President went when he appeared on one of the news programs, but the position was clear to the Russians.

Now I have thought long and hard about, you know, whether it was a mistake to use the word "internal". Maybe it gave a wrong connotation. But I am persuaded the authorities and the people making decisions in the Russian leadership had no doubt of our view and our position, and I guess that is the best answer I can give you to that. It was not a green light.

Chairman SMITH. Didn't someone at the State Department liken it to the U.S. Civil War?

Mr. COLLINS. Yes. Again, something I think all of us wish the analogy had not been used, but what was meant there was not—

Chairman SMITH. If I could interrupt, when was the conveyance quietly made of our unhappiness with the policy?

Mr. COLLINS. Well, we had been talking through the Ambassador really almost regularly on this subject as we watched the buildup in Chechnya. I would have to go back and review the record on the exact dates. I mean what I have is sort of the more clear public ones, but I know the Secretary publicly talked about this in the 13th of December, I think it was, and this was discussed at least privately in Brussels during the meetings with Mr. Kozyrev.

Co-Chairman D'AMATO. The Chairman has asked me to pursue his line of questioning with this question. Would you acknowledge the extreme weakness of the Russian central government, and what role does it play in the State Department's policy formulation, and what are you doing about it?

Mr. COLLINS. Well, I think it has been clear to almost all of us who have worked with the Russian Federation since December 25, 1991, that a basic trend in that country has been a devolution of authority and power away from the central government.

Now, I think many of us would argue that is not a bad thing and, indeed, was the kind of change we were hoping to see.

On the other hand, I think it is also true that this devolution has happened in a way which one might expect, given what is, in essence, a social, economic, and political revolution in many ways from the ground up that is taking place in that society.

The central authorities have in many ways for 3 years-plus now found themselves in the position of having a great difficulty in, if you will, enforcing or exerting their control over everything from tax collection to police powers.

What we have been working with them to do is not to reconstitute an old, if you will, centralized police state and to address that issue, but really quite to the contrary, to try to assist them in the process of developing rule of law, responsive institutions of both a market economy and the judicial system, and the necessarily legislative and federative base on which to structure a new kind of society.

But I would certainly say, as I think would many who came through when I was there up to the end of 1993, that there is, in essence, and has been for some time a crisis of governance in the Russian Federation, and addressing that has been one of the great challenges. You know, the issuance of decrees is one thing. Their enforcement is quite another.

Co-Chairman D'AMATO. I cannot help but make an observation because that is my nature, but Congressman Smith touched on, I think, something that I think reasonable people have to examine carefully. Did we inadvertently give a signal to the Russians that they could treat this problem as an internal issue? It potentially could have been handled, I think, in a diplomatic fashion in terms of what kind of governance Russia would permit in Chechnya. I think it becomes much more difficult having heard testimony from the first hearing to attempt to bring about any kind of diplomatic resolution now. That horse may be out of the barn, and it may never be possible. Obviously the more killings that take place and the more displacement that takes place, the greater the likelihood is that there will never be a reconstitution of any kind or any prospect of Chechnya staying within the Russian Federation unless there is an armed guard at the door.

I raise that because this is not the first time there have been questions about sending dangerously wrong diplomatic signals. I do not know whether or not, for example, Saddam Hussein would have done what he did with Kuwait without thinking he had received a signal, but I think reasonable people can say he would not have. Did the administration, the Bush administration, through its diplomacy or lack of good diplomacy encourage that invasion as a result of the manner in which there were signals transmitted that could have reasonably led people to believe, Saddam Hussein in this case and others, that the United States would not respond as it did?

So I think there is an analogy. So I do not want you to feel that I think that this is something that is unique, but I think it is important, and it would be a very real tragedy if, indeed such a signal was perceived to have been sent. I do not know if anyone could ever come to a determination on this. We never really came to a determination when the question of whether or not our Ambassador to Iraq gave the kind of signal that maybe Hussein could come and do it, but I think the Congressman's point really raises that same kind of question.

Did we handle this in such a manner and were our initial responses such as to give Yeltsin and his people reason to believe that we would be quiet, that he could appease the more authoritarian forces, win the respect of the military, something that he obviously needs, and thus possibly have precipitated the escalation that we have seen take place?

Just an observation. Mr. Chairman.

Chairman SMITH. Thank you very much.

Mr. COLLINS, could you tell us what message was conveyed? I know you said you would have to get back to us with a precise answer for the record, but you have no knowledge of those details here and now?

Mr. COLLINS. Well, I know it was in the very early stages of the buildup, and frankly, before we had anything like what we have had.

Chairman SMITH. What was the nature of those comments and to whom were they made?

Mr. COLLINS. I want to be accurate with you, so I would like to get back to you. It was done through diplomatic channels.

Chairman SMITH. Obviously so quietly that clearly the point for the administration on this very, very crucial policy does not know. Can you give us at least an approximate time, and again, to whom was the message given?

Mr. COLLINS. It was in early December, I mean, when we had been discussing this issue at the embassy and in Moscow, and they were aware of our views that this was a dangerous situation.

Chairman SMITH. What message were we conveying though? If our immediate public response was that this was an "internal affair" and a civil war analogous to the U.S. Civil War, if you elaborate, what was our message? Were we saying, absolutely do not go in there with brutal aggression?

As Paul Goble pointed out the other day, we should have known that this kind of massive response was certainly a possibility, if not a probability.

Mr. COLLINS. I would have to say to you I do not think we did it in such stark terms.

Chairman SMITH. I apologize to you, Mr. Collins, for the frequent votes, in which I must participate.

Mr. COLLINS. I understand.

Chairman SMITH. In fact, there is a series of votes coming up that could win or lose by one vote.

Co-Chairman D'AMATO. Let me say to Mr. Collins, it is good to see him. I hope you will get back some of that information that the Chairman requested.

Mr. COLLINS. I will do so, sir.

Co-Chairman D'AMATO. And certainly if there is a time that we can use the best diplomatic skills available to us, it is now. I would hope that you would continue in this very, very sensitive area. I do not know whether that horse is out of the barn and can never be retrieved.

I am going to have to excuse myself because I have four back-to-back votes starting right now at 11.30, and so, again, I turn the gavel over as I have in the past over the years to my distinguished colleague Congressman Hoyer.

Mr. HOYER. Thank you very much.

Mr. COLLINS. I just want to assure you we are going to be looking at every possible avenue to end this conflict and to find the most effective way to bring reconciliation, which I think is even a more difficult problem.

Mr. HOYER. Thank you, Senator.

It is a facet of this Commission that it is probably one of the least partisan commissions or committees of the Congress. It is not my strategy to simply out wait the others. I want you to know that. [Laughter.]

As a matter of fact, our director asked if I would be able to stay.

So the fact of the matter is that this is a very tough issue, following up on Chairman Smith's question and Senator D'Amato's observation. Clearly, our side of the aisle, as well as members on the then President Bush's side of the aisle, were concerned about what messages we sent in precipitating, if at all, the Iraqi attack on Kuwait and the occupation of Kuwait.

Clearly, there is a, and I make an observation now, responsibility of the U.S. Government to take such steps as it can to further the strengthening of democracy and free market economy in Russia. Clearly, Yeltsin has been the proponent of that and the leader of that effort. I think President Clinton is to be congratulated for a foreign policy success in stabilizing United States-Russian relations, as well as President Bush did in the course of his presidency, the move toward Russian democracy and free market economies.

However, it is also very important that we do not send conflicting messages or signals difficult to interpret with respect to the kinds of activities that are now going on in Chechnya.

Let me ask, however, a broader question. Ambassador Pashaev of Azerbaijan is here; Ambassador Ilves of Estonia is here as well. I have been to Estonia. I have not been to Azerbaijan. Although we perceive as Mr. Goble and others pointed out, that the Chechens history of inclusion in the Soviet Union was not as all the states have been, but, in fact, joined up. They signed the contract, if you will. We hear a lot about contracts lately. The basic document obviously of the United States said that people could join up. Disjoining is what we had the problem with, but joining was voluntary. There was no question about that.

Apparently historically there is quite a question since 1859 as to whether the Chechens ever at any time voluntarily wanted to be members of the Soviet Union or associated with Russia, and in fact, of course, they were one of nonsignatory units within Russia that were not signing on to the affiliation.

In that context, what ramifications, if any, do we see the Chechnya incursion on republics within Russia and neighboring states? Obviously I think the ramifications are different, but would you like to comment on that?

I would imagine that the two Ambassadors here are not going to be witnesses today, but clearly, I am sure they are looking at this relatively closely to see whether or not, for instance, in the case of Estonia, as well as Azerbaijan, who were perceived within the 15 republics of the former Soviet Union. We, of course, never recognized the incorporation of the Baltic States in the Soviet Union.

But what ramifications, if any, does this have, and what messages are we sending, if any, that the United States, the West, and others will be very forceful in its response to any kind of peacekeeping in any of the nonconstituent parts of Russia, i.e., the Baltic States, Azerbaijan, other states. I presume this is somewhat of a peacekeeping move from President Yeltsin's perspective.

Mr. COLLINS. Well, I, of course, cannot read the minds of all the governments around, but I can tell you that I have heard from at least two governments authoritatively, and what I suspect to be the case of all the others, and here I am talking about the ones who are outside and are independent states today, is that they, first of all, are most concerned in their approach to this problem to protect the principle of the

territorial integrity and the nonchange of borders by force as a fundamental principle in Europe, and there is nothing that is of greater concern to all of these governments.

In Budapest, for instance, we saw the signature of assurances to Belarus, Ukraine, Kazakhstan by Russia, the United States, and Great Britain, a fundamental part of which embodied that principle, and we have certainly heard from others in other contexts great concern about any erosion of that principle.

And I would say that when I came back from Moscow to Washington, the issue that was before us in this regard at that time had to do with Crimea and Ukraine's concern that somehow Crimea was going to be opened to something less than a solution within the territorial integrity and framework of the unit of the Ukrainian State, and our position was very clear about that at the time, that we considered Crimea a part of Ukraine, and we looked to any solution to the status and so forth of Ukraine within OSCE and Helsinki principles and within the framework which would protect the territorial integrity of Ukraine.

Now, I give you this as partly background to one of the reasons why we have seen this as an important part, an element of the way we sought to address this whole problem of Chechnya. I mean the internationally recognized border of the Russian Federation does include Chechnya, and frankly, there has been no great support anywhere in the area or among the neighbors of Russia to open the question of borders, and I think for reasons that are quite clear.

We stand by that principle, that the territorial integrity of each of these states is something that must be protected, and I think that is something that is in our interest and the interest of each of these states, and to begin to breach it is going to raise sort of untold problems, frankly.

Now, the question of, you know, the Russian Federation then as a unique state is really not different from the question, in my view, of all of the multiethnic states that make up what is known as the former Soviet Union, but I would also, deferring to the point that we never recognized the Baltics as a part of it, and say that that is a problem there as well.

Russian minorities or the Slavic minorities live outside Russia or the Slavic areas, in regions where the borders that were drawn essentially divided peoples. If open to a sort of absolute principle that any people has a right to its own state, a part of the world may begin to unravel in a way which I think has no foreseeable end and is very dangerous.

Now, that is not to say that we do not firmly support the ideas embodied in Helsinki that people have a right to self-determination; that the borders can be changed by mutual consent. But taken as a whole, the approach must be within those basic parameters.

A second reaction, I think, is quite clear. There is, you know, basically horror at what is going on in Chechnya. The use of military force for whatever reason, whether it was political, law enforcement, whatever it is, has gone terribly wrong, has caused an unbelievable horror in Grozny in terms of what has happened to its civilian population, and across that country.

The question of the implications of that, the willingness to engage in that is obviously very disquieting to many, many people. I mean I cannot be as eloquent as many of our Russian colleagues about this, who are repelled at what is going on.

Mr. HOYER. Apparently some of the Russian commanders, as well.

Mr. COLLINS. Well, yes, and you know, it is clear that this has divided almost every institution in Russia as far as I can see. You know, old alignments or old labels simply do not pertain, and the question of how people have aligned themselves on this issue, I think, is essentially quite interesting because the sort of continuing grinding away of this operation in Chechnya has, I think, relatively little support, by polling and other things we see essentially on this issue, do not give support.

Now, I think the great question, to finish, is, what lessons will be drawn? I think we would hope and we would certainly be making the point that if nothing else, what has happened in Chechnya, and if it has a legacy, we would hope that it would be the lesson that this kind of an approach does not work; that you have to find negotiated ways of doing this rather than bringing out the army to try to deal with an issue like this.

And I say that with very deep conviction, and frankly, that is why we have tried to work with OSCE. We think that they may be the one organization here that, by its traditions, by its capabilities, may be able to help get it stopped, show people a way out of this quagmire.

Chairman SMITH. Presumably the use of military force does not work for the Russians, but what lessons have we learned from this, in terms of cover versus overt diplomacy as a result of this?

Mr. COLLINS. Well, if you are asking me personally what should I have done, I probably in hindsight would have been more forceful and more open in saying that we were going to be very concerned about any denigration or derogation of human rights, but I think it is also true that I doubt any Russian official planned this to come out the way it did. I think no one in his right mind sought what is now a situation with no clear exit from the casualties.

Chairman SMITH. The fact is that they did not adequately appreciate the resistance that they have encountered. Clearly, they wanted to subdue and to subjugate those who would dissent. Had this been a 2-day military affair and they were, you know, to the capital or I should say to the palace quickly, it would have been a done deal very quickly.

But, I think what the Russians obviously did not calculate was how strong the resistance would be.

Mr. COLLINS. I am sure you are correct.

Chairman SMITH. Let me ask you a couple of other questions. Again, I thank you for your staying here, as you have made a very substantial time commitment to our hearing.

In this morning's Washington Post there was a story that the Russian Foreign Minister has said, "There is no reason for inspections or fact finding." He was speaking about the OSCE team that would be deployed to Grozny very shortly. What were the instructions to the OSCE team? Is this veto or limitation that the Foreign Minister is placing on the factfinding body of the OSCE acceptable to the administration?

Mr. COLLINS. Well, I think he also said that he hopes the purpose of this body will be to help them to produce elections and democracy as an outcome.

The machinery used by the OSCE is essentially to have a special representative of the chairman in office, and it is a very flexible instrument. I want to say to you, first of all, I am not a detailed expert on all of the workings of OSCE, but what I believe to be the case here, and I know was working as they explored how to arrange this mission, is first of all, it was worked out that it would be invited by the Russians.

Second, it would come as a representative of the chairman in office, with a delegation; that it would have access to the area and to officials in Moscow to discuss whatever was on the representative's mind; that the objective here was, as far as I am aware, to see whether there was a role to ameliorate humanitarian aspects of this whole crisis, and I think that was meant to include human rights, not just, if you will, medical supplies or something; and to negotiate with the Russians and to take stock after talking with all of the parties involved or arrange for next steps.

Now, what is going on now is essentially a mission that has been met by the Russians. I do not know who exactly they saw in Moscow. They have now gone to the area. They are to come back to Vienna and report to the council in Vienna, and there will then be a discussion of future steps.

Our support for this mission has been constant, and our encouragement of the Russians and all involved to use this mechanism has been constant from the beginning. You proposed it. They took a mission to Moscow. We supported that mission. Frankly, we thought it best to support them rather than to do it on our own.

Our representative in Vienna has worked very closely with the chairman in office and others to press, keep this going, to encourage it, encourage the Russians.

I think it is significant, frankly, that while everyone would have hoped this could have happened sooner in this conflict, the fact is when it did happen and we finally did get agreement that there would be a mission, the Russian authorities in Vienna on the council admitted there had been human rights violations; that that was a subject for which this body would go and would have a role.

So I think we will have to see, frankly, how the report comes back. We do not accept human rights as out of bounds as a subject for them. This has clearly been one of the purposes. However, the point of the mission really is to be forward looking, quite honestly, to try to find the ways that it can play a role in stopping this.

Chairman SMITH. So the visit to Chechnya would be seen as the first of several missions?

Mr. COLLINS. Well, I assume so. This is an ongoing process now.

Chairman SMITH. But didn't we protest or at least raise objections when the scope of that mission was limited by the Russians?

Mr. COLLINS. No.

Chairman SMITH. If the same ones committing the acts of brutality then deny access or put restrictions on what can be looked at or discussed, that automatically skews the results of the report.

Mr. COLLINS. Well, with respect, I do not know what the facts are yet. We did talk to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs today about denying Mr. Kovalev the ability to go with them. We have not had, as far as I am aware, official complaints or reports back from the representatives that they have been denied the ability to do what they are trying to do.

Now, I understand the statement by the Foreign Minister, but I would say they are on their way, and we have made it clear that we expect them to have the cooperation and the support of the Russian Government in accomplishing their mission.

Chairman SMITH. What is the penalty when the Russians place obstacles like this? I understand that there may be follow-ons and that the mission is forward looking, but here we have a situation where they say the war is over. Access to people who today—

Mr. COLLINS. Clearly—

Chairman SMITH. Please let me finish, and then I will yield completely to you.

On the front page of The New York Times, the story talked about soldiers going out, brutally killing innocent civilians. This mission could, by its mere presence, act as a buffer from those who would commit these kinds of atrocities, whether they are acting under the command of Russian authority or they are soldiers going on shooting sprees. To deny that kind of access, and for us not to raise an objection, causes me great concern.

Mr. COLLINS. Frankly, I am not sure that such access has been denied. We have not been told by the commission or the—

Chairman SMITH. If we are told they are denied, what will our response be?

Mr. COLLINS. Well, we will protest it.

Chairman SMITH. Loudly or covertly?

Mr. COLLINS. No, we will protest it in whatever way I think we can make it effective, but I think we have made ourselves very clear. The Secretary did it in Geneva both privately with Mr. Kozyrev and then publicly that we expect them to cooperate with this mission in achieving its objectives.

Chairman SMITH. Let me ask you, Mr. Collins. In your view, will Boris Yeltsin use the crisis to cancel the 1995 parliamentary elections and perhaps even the 1996 Presidential elections?

Mr. COLLINS. I do not think I can speculate about it, except what I can do is tell you what I know. That is that we have been authoritatively told by at least two very senior officials that the elections will go forward.

I know that that word is out there. It has been out and around in Moscow for well before the Chechnya crisis. There has always been a reason that he was going to do it, and I would only say that we have seen no move of an official nature or a step that seems to suggest that that is going to happen, and I know that there is strong opposition to that on the part of democrats and others in Russia.

Chairman SMITH. Just so that there is no misreading of U.S. intention—again harkening back to the “internal affair” statements—what would the administration do if these elections were to be canceled?

Mr. COLLINS. Well, I think if I could give you a more general sense here, it seems to us that there are a variety of things that could happen that would be very disturbing and would, again, cause us to begin to ask more pointedly, I think, of all of ourselves and so forth whether we had a Russia going in the wrong direction, that reform really was in sort of great danger as opposed to potential danger.

That might have to do with restrictions on freedom of the press that were really imposed. Now, I grant you there have been lots of threats against the press, but on balance, I think most believe that the press has been pretty courageous and open and free in this situation.

I think if there were efforts to, if you will, move away from things that are embodied in the constitution which they themselves have adopted that I think are important, and that includes human rights, guaran-

tees or freedoms, or the electoral process, and so forth, that would be pretty disturbing, and I think it would have been seen by all in the West as a movement in the wrong direction.

I think people were very disturbed on the economic side when we were seeing statements from the man who has recently been removed as the head of the privatization organization that privatization had gone too far. They had to move it back to renationalize and so forth.

I think, you know, things that look like they were reversing steps that I think all Russians who support reform believe have been critical to that process are going to be very disturbing, and that is what people are going to be watching very closely, and we do watch it closely.

I would only say that we also try not to see each and every instance, and I am not by any means here denigrating the importance of what is going on in Chechnya, but I must say that there is frequently a tendency toward hyperanalysis of every single statement or step being somehow the thing that has tipped the balance, and I think we have tried to keep a sense of whether there is a basic movement ahead on economic change in a positive direction or not.

Sure, there are some setbacks. Are there things happening in the political world which are really disturbing and indicate a trend moving in the wrong direction, and so forth?

Now, I am being very frank with you about this. That is really what I try to balance, and I basically think I try to ask myself at least once a week whether the premises in which we are basing our actions are the right ones. Sometimes I get the wrong answer to that question.

Chairman SMITH. Mr. Collins, are there republics adjacent to or in proximity to Chechnya that you think are ripe for this kind of action, both internally and with respect to the Russians might react?

Mr. COLLINS. I think the entire area of the North Caucasus which is inhabited, as you know very well, sir, with a variety of peoples is an area of potential instability. However, it is also true that each group there has its friends and its enemies, and it goes back centuries.

I think so far we do not see that any of the other republics or groups in that area are interested in getting sucked into this, but there is a danger of it, of course, and I think no one minimizes the danger that these people, all of whom know one another and are part of a society in North Caucasus, are also concerned that it not spread to their area.

Chairman SMITH. Shortly, the Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights—the subcommittee I chair—will receive testimony, as well as the text of the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices. I assume this terrible war will be included in that analysis.

Mr. COLLINS. All right. I would have to find out when it was finished. I know that there is reference in there to the episode in Moscow of expelling people from this part of the world, but I do not know what the cutoff date, frankly, is for the report formally, and I would have to find out.

Chairman SMITH. I would hope, especially on something of this magnitude, something occurring in early or mid-December—

Mr. COLLINS. Well, I am sure people who are addressing it or testifying would be in a position to address it, but this is really a formal question. I do not know what the cutoff date for the report was.

Chairman SMITH. Let me ask two final questions and then yield to Mr. Hoyer if he has any additional questions.

In 1994, Russia made a major pitch to be recognized by the international community as a peacekeeper on the territory of the former Soviet Union. What does this terrible situation that has occurred in Chechnya say about Russia's capabilities and legitimacy as a peacekeeper?

Mr. COLLINS. Well, first of all, any peacekeeping that would be done outside the borders of the Russian Federation, and I have been talking about those things over which international bodies have authority in terms of peacekeeping, will be done under someone's mandate, that is, some international mandate, if it is to be accepted as international peacekeeping.

Those mandates are carefully drawn, they have rules of engagement, standards of conduct, and they have a specific framework. I suppose as a practical matter there is going to be much greater skepticism about whether or not the peacekeeping role of Russian forces is one that can be counted on at this point, to be frank.

However, I would say to you that the guide or the judgment on that will be made at the time by the circumstances. They have troops still in Georgia at the invitation of the Georgian Government, but with observers there from the United Nations; these have not been, however, if you will, authorized or set according to mandates from the United Nations, except in the case of Yugoslavia.

Chairman SMITH. No, I understand there is no mandate on their own territory.

Mr. COLLINS. Well, but some of them are outside, as well.

Chairman SMITH. But, doesn't this at least cast some doubt on the reliability of the Russians, if something were to happen, in the Ukraine, for example, or somewhere else that was part of the former Soviet Union? How do we now regard them, after this brutal aggression? The curve seemed to be swinging in favor of some acceptance, but what is the sense now?

Mr. COLLINS. I really cannot give you a speculative answer.

Chairman SMITH. I am not asking for your speculation. I am asking for the assessment.

Yesterday I asked Secretary of State Warren Christopher a number of questions, none of which—whether dealing with Cuba, Russia, China—really were answered but when we got to Chechnya he did say to me we would get the final words on that policy from you.

There has to be an assessment right now as to whether these guys can be trusted. This is not a frivolous question.

Mr. COLLINS. No, of course not.

Chairman SMITH. This could happen somewhere else and what do we do? Do we stand by and wait to see what happens or do we express concern preemptively and aggressively to try to prevent atrocities?

Mr. COLLINS. What I can say to you is the basic principle is that each of these states is a sovereign, independent state. No one is going to accept as a valid, if you will, unilateral action by Russia or any other neighbor to put forces there without the consent of the state concerned, and certainly if it is something more than a bilateral matter without a clear and defined mandate, that it would have to be observed.

Now, the Russians would be held to that account in the same way as anyone else if they were to be involved, and I think that is the best answer I can give you.

I think certainly as a political reality, there will be people who would ask the same question you have posed. Is Russia prepared to abide by those? And I think a judgment would have to be made and would be made by the international community at the time, and I would only say to you that the one thing I have heard from many is that it obviously raises a question.

Chairman SMITH. One final question. What consequence or penalty are we looking for, in response to Russia's violation of the Budapest document as it relates to troop movements? What does the administration seek? What do you hope will happen at the OSCE regarding that?

Mr. COLLINS. As I understand these agreements and undertakings, it is not a question of the ability to impose a penalty. We certainly have brought it to their attention, and we will impress again on them, as I think is the basic means of operation in OSCE, the importance of observing the obligations which they have taken on themselves.

This is not a law in the traditional sense. It's a freely undertaken obligation, and it's important that Russia observe the obligations it has taken unto itself, and I think we take that very seriously.

Chairman SMITH. Mr. Hoyer.

Mr. HOYER. Thank you.

We are going to end. Again, Mr. Collins, I want to thank you for being here with us and thank you for all you have done down through the years. You are, in my opinion, one of the best that America has in dealing with situations that increasingly are complicated, that are nuanced, and that cry out for quiet diplomacy as well as public diplomacy, and pursuing one and having it unsuccessful will assuredly bring criticism that you should have used the other.

However, let me observe that in the emerging new world order, I think Western irresolution will be one of the most dangerous and destabilizing actions. Whether it was in the Sudetenland or Persian Gulf or in Bosnia. It is Bosnia where I think the West has covered itself with shame, where the United Nations and the CSCE recognized an independent state and then told that independent state that it would not help it defend itself by imposing an essentially unilateral embargo with the other party obviously having taken unto itself the arms that existed in Yugoslavia; Chechnya is perhaps, not perhaps, Chechnya in my opinion is not analogous. It is a more complicated situation, and clearly, while I understand the internal affair response, one of the things that we did in the Helsinki process from 1975 essentially, as you well recall, until 1989 was to overcome the international defense that human rights abuses within a country is an internal affair and that we ought not to pay attention to it.

Clearly, the progress in Helsinki has been made by the nonacceptance of the premise and that the undermining of human rights was, in turn, the world community's affair, and I would hope that as a supporter of this administration that it has shared the nuances with the State Department, which has a different role.

The State Department has a role of making sure that on a day-to-day, a week-to-week, month-to-month long-term basis we deal with people productively and effectively and in a way that enhances and does not undermine international security.

But I am convinced that a strong, principled articulation by our President and by the international community is the most stabilizing effort that we can make. I have been extremely disappointed with the English

and the French, more so perhaps with the French, but I think both the English and the French have been very reluctant to stand firmly against what the international community believes is the commission of war crimes. I think that created an atmosphere in which Chechnya can happen. Where the outrage at undermining human rights is absent, the egregious, shameful, and you share this view. I am not motivated by any animation at you, but at what we have allowed to occur in Bosnia, which is a cancer that will spread throughout the world.

And I would hope that the administration and that we, in a bipartisan way in this Congress, would stand very firm on the principles to which now almost every nation in the world ascribes. It is not the words that are a problem. It is the actions that are problems.

And so I, again, Mr. Chairman, congratulate you on having this hearing because Chechnya, as egregious as that individual situation is and we may focus on that, it is part and parcel of a wider problem, and that is a spreading of the use of force to solve international disputes, even though I think this whole question of self-determination is one of the most complicated questions I have tried to think about.

I have talked to Max Kampelman about it and Dick Shifter about it, who have been very involved with this Commission over the years. It is a question that I think ultimately fails of an answer. At what level do you stop having self-determination? I suppose at the one individual who says, "I want to be a state," and you could stop there. Obviously that is not either rational, reasonable, or promoting of international stability.

But given the complexity of the situation, the principles are not complex. The principles are clear and enunciated, and we need to state them strongly, and I think that is what Chairman Smith is talking about in terms of public enunciation to let no member of the international community believe that other members of the international community will allow the violation of those principles to go unresponded to.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman SMITH. I want to thank you, Mr. Hoyer, for that very eloquent summation because I think that very clearly expresses the bipartisan sense of this Commission.

And, Mr. Collins, thank you for your testimony.

The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:07 p.m., the Commission was adjourned.]