



HELSINKI COMMISSION HEARING

UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON
SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Testimony :: Hon. Steny H. Hoyer

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Ranking Member - Helsinki Commission

Mr. Chairman, it has been 15 years that I have served on the Helsinki Commission. During that time, no single foreign policy issue has consumed my attention as the struggle to save not only Bosnia, but the very Helsinki principles which were threatened by the aggression against that country.

In the early years, the international response could only be described as feckless. Once the United States decided to get involved, however, much has been accomplished. Our forces on the ground, our people in the field and our policy-makers who have developed the strategy for isolating and marginalizing nationalist extremists and, if indicted, apprehending them as well deserve recognition and support.

I hope, however, that no one is satisfied with what has been achieved, because it is far too little. Indeed, we should have a zero-option for Bosnia, which would mean zero displaced persons, zero barriers to safe internal movement for each citizen throughout the country, zero indicted persons at large, zero tolerance to discrimination based on ethnicity. All the money and all the people we devote to Bosnia become meaningless if our policy falls short of doing the right thing.

The biggest obstacle to Dayton implementation, in my view, remains the continued presence of Slobodan Milosevic and his regime in Belgrade. This year, we have seen the enormous benefits of positive change in Croatia. Democratic change in Serbia is even more crucial. Whether one has fallen to his propaganda machine, or to the weaponry of his murderous minions, all the people of Bosnia have been victims of Milosevic and his policies of genocide. Today, the Serbian media and Serbian students are stopped for speaking the truth about this self-proclaimed defender of Serb interests. Of course, change in Serbia will not make all of the problems in the region simply disappear, but it will allow us, for the first time, to talk about the prospects for long-term stability and true recovery in southeastern Europe.

I look forward to the detailed presentations of our two panels, and their thoughts on Bosnia's future under the Dayton Agreement.