

BULGARIA'S CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE OSCE

HEARING BEFORE THE COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

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**BULGARIA'S CHAIRMANSHIP
OF THE OSCE**

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BULGARIA'S CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE OSCE

FEBRUARY 26, 2004

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

The Commission met in Room 334, Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC, at 10:30 a.m., Hon. Christopher H. Smith, Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, presiding.

Commissioners present: Hon. Christopher H. Smith, Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe; Hon. Benjamin L. Cardin, Ranking Member, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe; and Hon. Alcee L. Hastings, Commissioner, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Witness present: His Excellency Solomon Passy, Bulgarian Minister of Foreign Affairs, OSCE Chairman-in-Office.

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, CHAIRMAN, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Mr. SMITH. Good morning. First I want to welcome all of you to this hearing of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. This morning we especially warmly welcome the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria, His Excellency Solomon Passy.

Minister Passy has had a long and varied career, including as an academic, a parliamentarian, and president of Bulgaria's largest non-governmental organization, the Atlantic Club of Bulgaria.

Since the fall of communism, he has been a leading proponent of Bulgaria's integration into the Euro-Atlantic community. This has a special significance with Bulgaria's impending NATO membership. With Bulgaria now leading the OSCE, we welcome Mr. Passy as the Chairman-in-Office.

I am very pleased that, in outlining your program for 2004, Mr. Minister, you stressed that implementation of OSCE commitments will top your agenda. Indeed, implementation of freely undertaken commitments by all 55 participating States is central to fostering cooperation, democratic transformation and respect for human rights and the rule of law in the OSCE region, thereby contributing significantly to the Euro-Atlantic stability and security. OSCE's core mission is to help ensure implementation.

As you know, Mr. Minister, we continue to face many challenges in the OSCE region. Even a short list would include the endless agony of war-torn Chechnya, the extremely difficult negotiations in Transdnies-

tria, the upcoming elections in Ukraine, the crackdown in Azerbaijan following rigged elections, the fledgling democracy in Georgia, the dismal human rights situation in Belarus and Uzbekistan, the entrenchment of a bizarre dictatorship in Turkmenistan, human trafficking, corruption that undermines the rule of law, and violent intolerance that tears the fabric of our societies.

I hope that the Bulgarian Chairmanship will maintain support for the OSCE's efforts to combat trafficking in persons, as we discussed in our earlier meeting.

Having been appointed last week at the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's Winter Meeting as the first Special Representative on Human Trafficking Issues, I will encourage the legislatures in the region to revamp laws whenever needed to provide the tools necessary for combating slavery.

In conjunction with strong leadership on this issue from the Chairman-in-Office, I believe we are poised to make substantial progress in thwarting this evil and nefarious trade.

In the spring of 2002, Europe witnessed a spike in anti-Semitic violence not seen in decades. Members of the Helsinki Commission have since actively engaged in the fight against anti-Semitism in the OSCE region, urging our fellow parliamentarians and government leaders to take action. There appears to be a gradual diminution of violent acts although sporadic episodes continue to arise throughout the region.

I was pleased that the Ministerial Council took a strong position on this, with foreign ministers again denouncing anti-Semitism and intolerance and approving a follow-up conference on anti-Semitism and a follow-up conference on racism, xenophobia and discrimination. These evils are worthy of more attention and I appreciate Bulgaria's leadership in supporting and facilitating these two events.

We look to Bulgaria to play a helpful role in fostering implementation of the newly-adopted plan on Roma and Sinti. Two years ago we were fortunate to have the Bulgarian Ambassador participate in a hearing on Romani human rights issues. We invited her contribution in light of Bulgaria's positive efforts to integrate its Romani minority in the field of education.

Just a few months ago, Bulgaria adopted comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation consistent with the Istanbul OSCE Summit Declaration, but much remains to be done to improve the situation for Roma in the OSCE. I am alarmed by reports of violent clashes between Roma and police in Slovakia and will continue to monitor developments there.

As you know, we have had the chairmen-in-office testify for the last 3 years: the foreign ministers of Romania, Portugal and the Netherlands. Your appearance is unique in that you are appearing before the Commission earlier in your tenure as Chairman.

The responsibilities of leading the OSCE will be challenging, yet this is also an exciting time for your country. I have followed Bulgaria, as our whole Commission has followed Bulgaria's remarkable transition since the fall of communism, and we are very pleased at Bulgaria's progress as a democratic country about to become a full-fledged member of NATO.

Unthinkable just 15 years ago, I know you have worked hard to achieve these reforms. We salute Bulgaria's firm cooperation in the war on terrorism and in building a more secure, peaceful and democratic world.

You bring a unique perspective to the chairmanship, coming from a country that has come a long way in such a short period of time in its democratic transformation. At the same time, we recognize the challenges that Bulgaria still faces in tackling corruption and organized crime and ensuring the rights of Roma and other minorities and in the area of religious liberty.

Mr. Minister, we wish you success in the months ahead in your efforts to strengthen the OSCE process.

At this point, I would like to yield to my very distinguished colleague, Ben Cardin, the Ranking Member on the Commission.

**HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, RANKING MEMBER,
COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE**

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

Dr. Passy, it is a pleasure to have you before our Commission.

We just had the opportunity of being together in Vienna at the Winter Meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, and we very much appreciated your openness at that meeting going over with our fellow parliamentarians your priority and vision for the year.

The Chair-in-Office is the key position for how OSCE progresses, and I must tell you we are extremely pleased to have you as the Chair-in-Office. Your reputation, your leadership, your frankness, all are what I think OSCE needs at this point, and we look forward to being a full partner, our U.S. delegation. As you have stated so well, your priority to implement the commitments that have already been made by the OSCE states; we think that is exactly what we should be doing and we very much look forward for strategies as to how our delegation can help in accomplishing that work.

Our Chairman mentioned some priorities of the U.S. delegation. One has been moving ahead with the anti-Semitism conference in Berlin. We are very pleased that is on track and we thank you very much for your support.

As part of that effort, though, we are hoping that the states of OSCE will comply and send statistical information to the ODIHR, and I would hope that Bulgaria would be one of those states that would be in the forefront to make sure that is done as promptly as possible and helping us encourage other states to move forward with transmission of information to the office of ODIHR.

On a similar line, we will have a follow-up meeting on racism, xenophobia and discrimination in September in Brussels, and I would hope that meeting would also receive the same type of priority and attention. With the widespread violence against Roma and other minorities, it is important that we maintain our commitment in this regard.

I was the chief sponsor of two OSCE Parliamentary Assembly resolutions on the North Caucasus, and the Chairman mentioned the current situation in Chechnya. We were very disappointed with the Russian delegation withholding its consensus on the mission mandate at the end of 2002, and we would hope that you—I know that you had recent meetings with the Foreign Minister in Moscow. We look forward to any thoughts you may have as to how we can move forward in a renewed effort regarding OSCE in Chechnya.

I chair the Parliamentary Assembly's Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment, and therefore I was extremely pleased that at the Ministerial Meeting in Maastricht we were

able to adopt the strategy document for economic and environmental dimension. This is the first major effort to do this since the 1990 Bonn Document.

So I look forward to hearing your assessment as to how we move forward in implementing the commitments that were made in Maastricht in regards to the economic areas.

I would just mention that in one meeting in Vienna, Nino Burjanadze reported to us the progress made in Georgia. And just one point I would emphasize in that report:

She pointed out that corruption basically was one of the key reasons to bring down the Government of Georgia, and that for Georgia to make progress, to attract international investment, to be able to get the type of support that they're going to need in order to make the economic reforms that are going to be critical, they have to move ahead on the democratic reforms. They must move ahead on anti-corruption. They must move ahead on rule of law, if they're going to be able to attract the investment they need in order to be successful.

So we do think all these issues are very much related: what we do on the economic front, what we do on human rights, what we do on security. We very much appreciate your advice to us, as an organization that must work with consensus, how we can assist you in moving forward on the commitment that we've all made at OSCE. We look very much forward to your testimony.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Cardin.

The chair recognizes Mr. Hastings.

**HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS, COMMISSIONER,
COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE**

Mr. HASTINGS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I join you and the Co-Chairman in welcoming our friend, Dr. Passy, the Chairman-in-Office of OSCE.

We appreciate having the opportunity to discuss with you the many critical issues facing the OSCE. I want to thank you for your leadership, Mr. Minister.

As I have had the opportunity to speak with you personally within the last week when I was in Vienna, I'll not bore you or the Commission with long introductory remarks. Suffice it to say that I think you know of mine and the committee's personal passion and commitment to this organization, and I look forward to working even more closely with you over the coming year.

I have asserted to you and intend to keep that foremost in mind in your discussions that it is essential that the delegation in Vienna and the members of the Parliamentary Assembly work more closely together as we face the challenges ahead.

Additionally, I salute you on your vision of Bulgaria's Chairmanship this year, and I specifically refer to the powerful remarks that you made in Vienna regarding implementation of OSCE commitments. Without enumerating them, suffice it to say that I know that you intend, to the extent that you can, to pursue those interests.

Dr. Passy, I want to apologize to you and the Commission in advance. All of the problems are not in Europe or in the trans-Atlantic relationship. In the Western Hemisphere, we have an ongoing significant diplomatic and humanitarian crisis in Haiti. I happen to be a person that's

directly involved in trying to participate in resolving that conflict, and I am in a meeting that I left and I am going to have to return to that meeting. So I apologize to you.

But I would add, because you referred to it and just so that the Commission is on record, a note of personal condolence for your personal friend, the President of Macedonia, who was killed in the airplane crash.

If the record will permit, I wanted to draw from one of the references made by someone else that you know. European Commission Chief Romano Prodi said, "It was a very sad day for Macedonia, that loses a wise and balanced leader; a very sad day for the Balkan region, whose integration he had spent so much effort trying to achieve; and a very sad day for Europe, that loses a friend and a supporter of the values of tolerance on which your union is based."

I am sure that his memory will rest with you in your undertakings, and you obviously have all of our condolences. And if you would convey that to any or all who are concerned, we'd appreciate it.

Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Hastings, and let me just echo and on behalf of the Commission express our very strong and heartfelt condolences on the passing of Macedonian President Boris Trajkovsky in the plane crash that just occurred. He was a great man. He certainly brought Macedonia, since 1999, forward when it comes to democratization and human rights. Our entire Commission, like you, feels very touched by the loss. He will be missed.

Before going to Dr. Passy, I would like to note that Ambassador Ivan Naydenov, the director of the OSCE Bulgarian Foreign Ministry and personal representative of the Chair-in-Office, is with you today; Richard Murphy, the OSCE spokesman; and Ambassador of the Republic of Bulgaria to the United States, Elena Poptodorova, who is also here and has been here before and has done a wonderful job for your country, representing you to the United States.

Dr. Passy, please proceed however you wish.

**HIS EXCELLENCY HON. SOLOMON PASSY,
BULGARIAN MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
OSCE CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE**

Min. PASSY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Distinguished members of the U.S. Congress and the Helsinki Commission, ladies and gentlemen, first of all, thank you for the condolences that you extended for the death of President Trajkovsky. I would like to join on behalf of my delegation and my government and OSCE and the Bulgarian people to these condolences that we want to extend to our Macedonian neighbors. President Trajkovsky was a great European from the Balkans.

It is really an honor and privilege for me to speak before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Indeed, I am delighted to see the initials CSCE still in use. They meant a great deal to me and others of my generation as we struggled for the implementation of the Helsinki values back in the '70s and in the '80s.

Your long-standing and persistent work of monitoring and implementation of the basic principles and values of the Helsinki process since its inception 30 years ago is widely recognized and appreciated.

In some ways, this is a daunting audience. I will rarely have an opportunity to address a body that is so well-informed about the OSCE. But on the other hand, the realization that this Commission shares my passion for this unique organization, as well as my determination to build on its considerable achievements, is a wonderful encouragement.

It is a pleasure to see again my friend Chris Smith and his colleagues, whom I saw just last week in the meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Vienna. I salute the role played by the assembly in our work, especially in monitoring and observing elections.

I sometimes hear people speculate about whether the OSCE is still needed in the 21 century. NATO and the European Union are enlarging. There is a NATO–Russia Council. So who needs the OSCE?

But let us pause to consider just how much the OSCE has achieved in its short life. When I say short, I remind you that we will celebrate our 10th anniversary as the OSCE in December this year.

The organization is exactly the same age as my youngest son. It is barely out of its infancy, and yet we have much to be proud of.

During the past decade, the OSCE has helped to end the civil war in Tajikistan and constrain conflicts in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova and Georgia. It played a major role in building civil society in post-conflict Bosnia and Kosovo and continues to do so.

Today the relevance of our unique comprehensive approach to security, stressing human rights and economic development as well as political-military issues, is undiminished.

The OSCE is the only European security forum that includes the United States, Canada and all the countries from the former Soviet Union as full and equal members. Our 18 field missions, especially in the countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia, represent an unrivaled on-the-ground presence that can help us all deal more effectively with new threats to security, not the least of which is terrorism. I will have more to say about this later.

Bulgaria has taken the OSCE Chairmanship at a significant period in international relations. Both the European Union and NATO are welcoming new members this year. Out of 55 OSCE participating States, 26 will soon be members of NATO and 27 will belong to the European Union. Bulgaria, along with six other European countries, will join NATO this spring and my country will join the European Union in January 2007.

I am convinced that these two historic enlargements will be beneficial for the OSCE. They have the potential to further strengthen the core function of the organization, creating a common and indivisible security space promoting human rights and contributing to the building of democratic institutions throughout the OSCE region.

The December 2003 Maastricht Ministerial Council produced a number of valuable action-oriented strategies. Our priority is to translate these commitments into practical actions.

Preventing and combating terrorism is a top priority for all of us. The work of the OSCE in fighting terrorism rarely makes headlines, but that does not diminish its importance. With the practical, pragmatic approach that is so characteristic for our organization, we have concentrated our efforts on concrete areas where we can make a real difference: airport security, policing, secure travel documents to name but a few.

Let me give you some examples. We all know that Al Qaeda and its affiliates possess shoulder-fired missiles and have used them against aircraft. Man-portable air defense systems, or MANPADS as they're known, are being sold on the black market in and around OSCE countries.

Recognizing this threat, the OSCE last month held the first intergovernmental conference on this subject, bringing together experts in airport security and counterterrorism to discuss how we can all defend ourselves against this menace.

This was not about worthy statements of intent by diplomats. It was about the practitioners, the security experts, the people at the hard end, sharing their experience, threat assessments and best practices.

OSCE participating States are keenly aware of the need to strengthen communication between their counterterrorism officials, but we do not just talk about it. The OSCE has launched an Internet-based network linking these officials through which they are exchanging information. Once again, we're bringing together the practitioners.

We're strengthening our partnership with the international organizations. Continued close interaction with the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee is of crucial importance. In March, the OSCE will host in Vienna the third special meeting of the U.N. Counter-Terrorism Committee with international, regional and sub-regional organizations.

The December 2003 Maastricht decision on travel document security affirmed the commitment of participating States to meet certain security standards for passports and other documents. Implementation of the decision will start with the workshop on travel document security in Vienna on the 1 and 2 of March.

This is not an abstract or theoretical discussion. It is about making it more difficult for terrorists and criminals to cross national frontiers using false passports and ID cards.

I am proud to tell you that we in Bulgaria have some of the most secure passports in the world, offering multiple levels of protection against forgery. I am told it will take another three to 5 years before the European Union has passports of such technical sophistication. We are also one of the few, if not only, countries that uses color photos in the visas which we issue. This is a practice that we are ready to share with many other countries and governments.

The OSCE is expanding its activities in policing. Our senior police adviser, Richard Monk, who addressed the distinguished Commission last year, has built up an impressive team of experienced police officers whose expertise is greatly in demand of our participating States, most recently in Kyrgyzstan, as they struggle to modernize their police forces.

Policing is in some respects the perfect OSCE issue, bringing together security and human rights. An efficient, accountable police force that is trusted by the population it serves does not have to resort to brutality or torture to obtain information needed to solve crimes.

U.S. police officers have served with distinction in OSCE police operations and your country has been generous in funding them. I am very grateful for your continued support, but I have to mention that Mr. Monk still does not have all the resources he needs to meet the demands for his team's policing expertise, and I appeal to all participating States to give him the backing he deserves.

As I said, there are activities that you are unlikely to read about in your newspapers, but I am convinced that taken together they represent measures of real practical value in the war on terrorism that will make us all more secure.

Security clearly remains a top priority for all of us, but that does not mean we will neglect the human dimension of OSCE activities, which I know is a particular concern of this Commission. On the contrary, it is the shared values, human and democratic, that underlie our comprehensive approach to security that make the OSCE unique. We must never stop championing these values.

The Bulgarian Chairmanship will do its best to further advance the goal of combating anti-Semitism, racism, xenophobia and other forms of discrimination in the OSCE area. These phenomena continue to be a challenge for many of our societies.

At present, we're preparing three important events for this year: a conference on anti-Semitism in Berlin on April 28 and 29, following up on our successful event in Vienna last year at which the U.S. delegation was ably led by former Mayor Giuliani. The second one is a conference in Brussels on tolerance and the fight against racism, xenophobia and discrimination. The third is a special meeting in Paris on the relationship between racist, xenophobic and anti-Semitic propaganda on the Internet and hate crimes.

Trafficking in human beings will continue to be a focus of the Chairmanship in 2004. The OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings provides the participating States with a comprehensive tool kit for eradicating this abominable phenomenon that afflicts all OSCE states, whether they're countries of origin, transition or destination.

The appointment of a special representative on human trafficking and the creation of a special unit in the OSCE secretariat needs to be finalized as soon as possible.

In this field, as in others, we need actions not words, but there is one key point that I would like to make. I believe too little attention is given to countries of destination. Of course, countries of origin and transit must combat the problem of human trafficking at its source, but we must not forget that many of the women and young girls who fall victim of this barbarous trade end up in Western cities, on the streets, in bars, in nightclubs, in brothels.

I would like to see a concerted and high-profile campaign by all OSCE-participating States, both east and west of Vienna, to rescue victims and punish those who abuse them. A firm and persistent police clampdown on the work of traffickers in Western cities would send a clear message to these criminal gangs that their evil work will not be tolerated.

And victims should not be criminalized as all too often is the case. They deserve our assistance and should be treated with compassion and respect.

Mr. Chairman, allow me to highlight some regional issues that we feel deserve particular attention.

Georgia, under its new leadership, is preparing for parliamentary elections next month. The elections should reconfirm this country's path to democracy and enable a real fresh start in rebuilding and modernizing the country.

During my recent visit to Georgia, I was impressed by the remarkable work that the OSCE is doing there, which includes monitoring the border with Chechnya and helping to dispose of stockpiles of ammunition from the Soviet era, as well as democratic institution building.

I am sure that our organization can do even more to help the country. The OSCE's Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights has a vital role to play in ensuring that the March 28 elections in Georgia are held in the best possible democratic conditions.

We're determined also to step up efforts to solve the Moldova conflict. The Bulgarian Chairmanship organized a meeting of the mediators in Sofia on January 27, which reiterated support for the five-sided format and continued the discussion on the mediator's document. The participants agreed to blueprints for resuming the negotiations. A second mediator's meeting took place this week in Belgrade, and our Ambassador is just arriving from there.

We will continue to encourage the parties to find a viable and long-lasting solution for the problem.

During my visit to Moscow last week, Foreign Minister Ivanov said he would welcome a resumption of OSCE activity related to Chechnya. We have asked our staff to come up with proposals for projects related to Chechnya. ODIHR will be the principal partner on behalf of the OSCE.

As Chairman-in-Office, I very much welcome the readiness of the Russian Government to cooperate with the OSCE. The Chairmanship also renews its appeal to the Russian Federation to fulfill its Istanbul commitments.

An important priority for the Bulgarian Chairmanship is to step up the dialogue of the OSCE with the European Union and NATO. We believe that there is a growing need to improve coordination of our work with that of the European Union and NATO. Together we represent the key institutions for stability, security and democracy in the Euro-Atlantic area.

There is room to enhance further dialogue at institutional levels, as well as on the ground in the field presences. In this respect, we think that it would make sense if OSCE were invited to attend the EU-U.S. Summit in Ireland, as well as the NATO Summit in Istanbul, and the meetings of G-8. The relationship between the Russian Federation and the OSCE is also critical for the future of the organization.

The OSCE, EU, and NATO each have a dialogue of their own with the Mediterranean countries. Each makes a valuable contribution, but the time is right for a new approach. We believe that an EU-OSCE-NATO joint effort on the Mediterranean region could provide a useful framework for defining an integrated approach for enhancing cooperation in the area.

The Bulgarian Chairmanship has made education a key priority. We believe that education is a powerful tool for achieving the goals of comprehensive security and promoting the democratic norms and values of the OSCE. Education and training should continue to be a pivotal element in OSCE human rights protection programs and activities. They are critical for the promotion of respect for human rights and tolerance and the creation and development of democratic institutions. Education and training are vital for empowering individuals and groups with the capacity to resolve conflict in a peaceful manner.

The first Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting, SHDM as we call it, this year will be devoted to the topic of human rights, education and training.

In conclusion, let me say, Mr. Chairman, that what we would like to achieve this year is the implementation of agreed OSCE decisions. This will be the essence of our Chairmanship.

I would like to leave you my personal vision of the future of OSCE. I believe our current participating States should develop a greater appreciation of the value of this unique organization and make even more use of it in tackling the challenges we all face. I believe we should continue to refocus our activities more toward the Caucasus and Central Asia. I believe we should reach out more into adjacent areas, in particular Afghanistan or Iraq, offering in the first place the model of comprehensive, consensus-based cooperative security that has served the Euro-Atlantic area so well since the Helsinki Final Act.

More than that, I believe we should be willing to offer our proven expertise in building democracy and promoting security to countries outside the OSCE. This, I believe, will be the challenge for the next decade.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, distinguished members of the Helsinki Commission. I will be glad to respond to your comments and questions.

Mr. SMITH. Dr. Passy, thank you very much for a very eloquent and comprehensive statement. The sentiments you have expressed, the heartfelt sentiments, are like music to our ears, I can tell you. You understand the issues and we feel that the OSCE is in very capable hands, and we look forward to a good, close collaboration.

I would encourage you, and I think you know this already, but we have an extraordinarily passionate and effective ambassador in Ambassador Minikes, who cares deeply about OSCE issues, works them 24/7, even comes to our Parliamentary Assemblies, sits, advises and works with us for days on end at our Parliamentary Assemblies. So you have a good friend in him and I do hope you will turn to him in any way that you think will be useful.

I also want to comment or say that we hope that Mr. Haraszti, the media representative—we know that Belarus was holding up a consensus on that and our hope is that the sooner that person is named, the better. So we are expecting some good things there because certainly media freedom is a very significant issue.

You mentioned Georgia. Yesterday President Saakashvili was here and went around and met with various Members of Congress and executive branch people. There are very high hopes now for Georgia with his win in a free and fair election, 96 percent of the people. In fact, he commented in his opening that it can only be downhill from now, because you cannot meet the expectations of 96 percent of the people.

Still, certainly he gets a godsend from this country, that everyone is looking at with a great deal of hope and optimism about what he can do for that country, and particularly the corruption that has ravaged Georgia for so long.

Perhaps you might want to comment on a couple of things. This Commission, as you probably know, was—it was our Commission that had recommended that there be an anti-Semitism conference to be held by the OSCE. We ourselves held three summits if you will—one here in this room, one in Vienna, another in Berlin—and we brought together

some of the most thoughtful minds who gave us very disturbing information as to this rising tide of anti-Semitism in Europe, Canada and the United States.

I just want to convey to you, and I think you know this, just how strongly and passionately we feel that anti-Semitism and the fight, the combat, against anti-Semitism have to be of the highest priorities. “Never again” has to mean never again in all of its vicious manifestations.

So I do hope that you will use your leverage, your strategic position, as effectively as possible to mitigate these horrible crimes that are being committed against Jews.

Having said that, we have run into some reluctance at times to keep it separate and unique, this fight against anti-Semitism. There has been this move by some to fold it into the xenophobia and racism conferences and meetings. We think, as a Commission—and this is bipartisan, Democratic and Republican, and we believe this passionately—that this needs to stay uniquely focused upon, because it is like a cancer that needs to be fought. Because it is so easily looked over, especially when there are differences, as our various meetings have suggested; when people who disagree with the politics of Israel use that as a pretext to allow their hate to manifest.

So I do hope that you will keep it separate and unique so that we can keep our eye on the ball collectively as nations.

On trafficking I think your point about destination countries is an excellent one. We found when we passed our trafficking legislation—I was the prime sponsor of it—that we have a serious destination problem here in the United States. According to the U.S. Department of State, 18,000–20,000 people are trafficked into the United States every year, many of those for forced prostitution. Our U.S. attorneys now have the tools to shut down and to liberate the women.

However, your point, I think, is well taken. It is not just countries of origination and transit—destination countries.

I would ask you to pay particular attention to Holland, where prostitution is legal, which is something I find wrong, but that is my view. Nevertheless, we have got this, and the line of demarcation between those who are trafficked and those who are prostitutes is a very thin one at best. Eighty percent of the women in the brothels in the Netherlands are foreigners. I do not think it is rocket science to suggest that many of those have been trafficked.

So countries of destination need to be looked at, as you have pointed out so eloquently, very carefully.

On Central Asia, if I heard it correctly when you spoke last week, you are planning a trip there. You did not say when, but maybe in the spring. I do hope that the sooner the better. Central Asia could benefit from your experience in Bulgaria, and your country’s experience as they have not matriculated into democracies, that all of us had hoped for. So you might want to touch on that.

Finally, Belarus and Ukraine both have elections in October. Yesterday the International Relations Committee passed a bill that I had sponsored called the Belarus Democracy Act, designed to provide significant amounts of money and support to the civil society, free media, human rights groups, election monitoring.

You might want to touch on those two countries, because certainly, if what leads up to those elections is not free and fair, access to media, the outcome will be predetermined, even if on the day of the election there is at least the surface appeal of a free election. If you deny media access to the opposition candidates, you guarantee an outcome.

So you might want to touch on those, too, what the OSCE might do on Ukraine and Belarus, in particular Central Asia, like I said. If you could start by responding to the concerns about anti-Semitism, because we really believe after Berlin, there has to be a robust follow-up that does not quit as we go into the years.

Min. PASSY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First, on anti-Semitism, this is something that is very foreign to my own country and to my own people. We do not understand in Bulgaria this phenomenon. Bulgaria has always been a country of tolerance and the Bulgarian people have always been people of tolerance. I can just mention a couple of examples.

In the beginning of the last century, when the Armenians were exiled, they found shelter in Bulgaria. When the White Russians were in trouble after the revolution in Russia, they again found shelter in Bulgaria. During the World War II, Bulgaria rescued 50,000 Bulgarian Jews and did not send any single one from our territory to the concentration camps. Today in our coalition government we have a junior partner that is a party that traditionally represents the Turkish minority in Bulgaria.

So this is a phenomenon that is very foreign to us, and you can rely on the very strong support of the Chairmanship to promote tolerance in all of its forms.

As far as the question on Ukraine is concerned, the Chairmanship intends to explore the opportunities for cooperation with Ukraine in the observation of the upcoming presidential elections. We consider that the involvement of the OSCE in the elections observation process is indispensable.

We hope that Ukrainian authorities will reiterate their support for the project with Ukraine in further improving the election process developed by the OSCE project coordinator in Ukraine.

Our Secretary General, Mr. Jan Kubis, is going to visit Ukraine shortly. I have asked him to meet not only the Ukrainian leadership, but also the opposition in Ukraine. I know from personal experience how important it is for countries, when they have important visits from such organizations like OSCE, to be given the chance to meet both the opposition and the leadership.

You had also a question on Belarus. We, of course, are in progress with Belarus. I spoke with the Belarusian Foreign Minister a couple of times on the election and important issues in OSCE. The ODIHR will be observing the elections. We share the view that the necessary conditions for fair and democratic elections should be created, and we have to help the Belarusians to have free and democratic elections in the future.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Cardin?

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

If I could follow-up on the anti-Semitism conference, for one moment, in Berlin, we note that there will be action-oriented workshops that will allow participants to get involved in the nuts and bolts.

I guess I would like to get your observations on the follow-up to Berlin. I think we are well under way in preparing a very successful conference. My expectation is that coming out of that conference will be specific recommendations, whether they relate to education or the way that we handle in our schools the Holocaust or whether it deals with passing certain laws in our countries dealing with hate crimes.

My question would be that we are not far away from the conference itself. What are you anticipating during your term as a follow-up to implement what comes out of Berlin?

Min. PASSY. The idea of the workshops is to define concrete steps, concrete measures. It will be very difficult to prejudice what will be the outcome of these workshops, but we believe that this is a working format to give a chance to go forward, and we believe that this might be part of the decisions of the Ministerial Meeting in Sofia.

We are very much focused on this Ministerial Meeting in Sofia, and we do hope to have a good Ministerial Meeting with documents to be accepted. Of course, we know that this is not an easy task and all of you know that our organization is working on a consensus principle. This is another question on which I elaborated in Vienna a couple of weeks ago: If our organization wants to go faster and to meet the challenges of the day in a more adequate manner, I do believe that we have to reconsider the consensus principle for making the decisions.

Mr. CARDIN. We have commented on your approach for majority rule, which we thought was a very bold statement that you made in Vienna. I am wondering if you got any reaction from any of your colleagues from that statement.

Min. PASSY. Of course I have to stress that this is my proposal. I am not speaking as a Chairman-in-Office in this case. Of course, we shall need the 55 countries to say, "Yes," before this becomes the decision of OSCE.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Chairman, I wonder how well we would do with consensus here in Congress. It might be an interesting concept. Of course, we would not have any chairmen, because we would never agree on that.

But in any event, let me move on to a second subject if I might, and that is to deal with the economic document that came out of Maastricht. Part of that was to fight corruption, with the expectation that member states will pass comprehensive plans to deal with corruption in their individual states.

My question is, you have put a priority on implementation. One suggestion that has been made for implementation is to get a high-level meeting of the ministers of justice or interior from the member states to work on ways to implement the commitment to fight corruption, learning from what other states have done. Are you anticipating that there would be such a meeting during your term in office?

Min. PASSY. We have not discussed this question in an OSCE format. This is an idea that we might pass.

Mr. CARDIN. Well, I would encourage you to look into that, because one thing that I have learned is that corruption is in every one of our states and that we need to be very vigilant in dealing with it, but there are some member states that have a long way to go. Corruption is rampant. I think having collective meetings on this may very well help give courage to some of our states that really need to make more progress in this area.

Min. PASSY. What I can do is to pass the message and to ask for initial reactions.

Mr. CARDIN. Thank you.

On education, it is a bold statement, because it is an area that has not gotten much attention in OSCE. Education and training, I agree with you, is absolutely essential if we are going to be able to comply with OSCE principles.

We had a chance to visit a Roma camp and what the leadership in that camp is trying to do is to make it available for their children to be educated, which has not always been the case among the Roma minority.

Training becomes absolutely essential if we are going to be able to develop economies in countries in transition to meet the challenges in the OSCE commitments.

I just encourage you to proceed although it is a new subject for OSCE as far as the specific commitment, but if you have other ways in that you think that strategy can be advanced, please share that with us.

Min. PASSY. Thank you very much for this question.

Actually, one of the very concrete steps that we have in mind is a special conference on education which to bring all ministers for Central Asia. We are planning to invite all ministers of education from the Central Asian countries, members of the OSCE, and we are planning to have this in the first half of this year.

Mr. CARDIN. And let me talk about Chechnya for one moment. We have not put too much attention in this hearing on Chechnya. It has been an area of major concern for the U.S. delegation.

Can you share with us your observations, from the meeting with the foreign minister of Moscow, Russia, as to what is likely progress that can be made in regards to the Chechen conflict; an OSCE role in that regard?

Min. PASSY. The first thing that I would like to underline is that it was the Russian side that raised the question with Chechnya.

As I said during my recent visit to Moscow, we cannot expect miracles, but we have to start somewhere. We are discussing possible forms of OSCE re-engagement in the alleviation of the situation in Chechnya. I believe that the OSCE can contribute to this effect.

Foreign Minister Ivanov mentioned concrete projects. Of course, what will be the size and what will be depth of these projects we still have to decide upon. I do believe that the next and future Russian Government will follow up and this engagement of the Russian side will stay with the future governments.

Mr. CARDIN. I would hope that you would keep our Ambassador informed on the progress or lack of progress in Chechnya, because we very much get our information from our Ambassador as to how useful it is for us to continue to raise these issues at OSCE Parliamentary Assemblies. Before Edinburgh, we would like to get at least the most updated information about what is happening in Chechnya regarding OSCE.

So if you could keep us apprised, we would very much appreciate that.

Min. PASSY. I will keep you informed on the progress when we have progress, and if we have progress I will keep you informed both through our Ambassadors in Vienna and our Ambassador here in Washington.

Mr. CARDIN. Thank you.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SMITH. Let me just ask you, Dr. Passy, both Mr. Cardin and I had a number of bilaterals during our most recent trip. One of those was with the French Ambassador, during which we got into Holocaust remembrance and the teaching of Holocaust remembrance in schools.

I heard something that I had not heard before: that some teachers were fearful of teaching because of retaliation from students. The other point was that some of them simply would not do it because they do not believe in it or they are antagonistic toward remembering the Holocaust.

I would hope that with the upcoming meeting in Berlin, that is something that might be looked at, that this reluctance, this teaching of history—I mean, the deniers are out there, we know. They have been making those sickening bogus claims for years.

But to have people who are teaching children embracing that or refusing to teach what actually occurred is a breach of justice, I think, and contributes to an ongoing tolerance of anti-Semitism I would ask you to take a look at that at Berlin, if not before, leading up to it.

Secondly, I would just like to ask you about—we were led to believe that those last few camps of internally displaced persons in Ingushetia will be closed this spring and their inhabitants will be, quote, “encouraged”—we know what that means, compelled—to return to Chechnya. What can the OSCE do to urge the Russians not to forcibly return individuals or to create circumstances where return is the only option?

Having said that, at the Maastricht Ministerial Meeting, the U.N. Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement were characterized as a useful framework for the work of the OSCE, and I wonder if they might be applied, those principles, to those individuals who are on the verge of being compelled to return to Chechnya.

Min. PASSY. On the Holocaust, thank you very much for this idea. I will follow up on that, and we shall come back to you, maybe before the conference if not immediately after it.

On Ingushetia, OSCE as such knows very little about what is going on after the closure of the mission there. As we know, the United Nations are working there and we are planning to discuss with the United Nations how we can cooperate in this area. So I can be more specific on that after an inquiry with the United Nations.

Mr. SMITH. It would be appreciated if you could get back to us, and if we could work with you on that, because we have had a number of hearings over the years on Chechnya and on IDPs and on refugees. In fact, we had Yelena Bonner twice testify when the war in Chechnya was in its worst stages and they continue to be the victims of that terrible conflict.

I know your time is getting close because you have to go over to the State Department, but I would like to ask you a couple of questions regarding Kosovo. Our Commission recently met with Archbishop Artemije. He made a very powerful case, with an enormous amount of supporting documentation, that there is a systematic destruction of churches and monasteries of Orthodox Serbs in Kosovo.

Our Commission—and I know you would agree—takes the view that whether it be Serb, Orthodox, whether it be Islam, no matter what the faith is, tolerance and respect for houses of worship, monasteries, temples, mosques, is absolutely paramount. To look at these numerous leveled churches and monasteries was devastating.

Now, I know that the international community is aware of it, in fact, Mr. Cardin and I brought this up when we visited NATO, but there seems to be a lackluster response. I would ask you, as chair-in-office, to take a look at the situation in Kosovo—maybe you would want to respond.

We were all gung-ho on liberating Kosovo from Milosevic, but when there is a repression that goes the other way, we have got to be equally vigilant and outspoken in defense of innocent victims, in this case the Orthodox Serbs in Kosovo.

If you could respond or get back to us on that, we would appreciate that, because we have to be fair and evenhanded. The OSCE plays that, a spectacularly important role in terms of being there for everyone and not taking sides.

Min. PASSY. Thank you very much, especially on the churches.

Bulgaria as such was concerned about the future of the churches and the situation of the Orthodox churches in Kosovo. During our term on the Security Council, Bulgaria made an amendment to one of the resolutions in which it was specially passed text for the churches in Kosovo.

But whether OSCE as such may have some role in this process, we shall have to get in touch first with UNMOVIC [United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission], and I believe that after that I can be more concrete on that.

Mr. SMITH. I appreciate that.

Just one final question and then I will turn to Mr. Cardin for any concluding remarks or questions. You talked about policing, and certainly the OSCE is playing a very good role.

We had found in trafficking—and I know you know this as well—that policing is our Achilles heel. It is at that level of government, law enforcement, that if you have corrupt officials, policemen on the take, the efforts to mitigate and end trafficking are hampered.

You might want to comment on what can be done. I know there is training going on in a number of our OSCE countries of police, human rights training in general, anti-trafficking training in particular. But how do we weed out those—especially those that are not recruits and going through the police academies—those who are corrupt and are a part of the problem and not part of the solution?

Min. PASSY. Maybe the most important thing is cooperation between the different police authorities in our countries. Our cooperation under the framework of the European Union, cooperation under the framework of OSCE, under the framework of NATO, under the framework of Europol, of Interpol, etc.

International cooperation is the key to the success of our efforts. So from this point of view, I believe that establishment of important agencies—representation of important American agencies on the Balkans may be of great support to this process.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Cardin?

Mr. CARDIN. Well, let me just thank you for your time.

I really do hope that the decision on the Representative on Freedom of the Media gets resolved. I see this document that was put out by OSCE, it looks like today, that gives until March 7, I take it, for the objections to be raised without identification of country.

I think there comes a time where you need to look at a procedure that requires the country to oppose openly if they are going to oppose, rather than being able to do it just through these informal ways of blocking

any action in the OSCE, I just encourage—this is a very important position that needs to be filled, and there seems to be strong agreement as to the person that should be occupying this position, and I would just urge you to do everything in your power to complete this appointment as quickly as possible.

Min. PASSY. Well, thank you very much. I absolutely agree that this is a key appointment for the future of freedom of the media, I would say, in the OSCE area. It was a very difficult problem that we faced—it was difficult for us when we took the Chairmanship on January 1 of this year. This was one of the difficult problems.

However, I have to say that we are thankful to a number of governments. I had several telephone calls with my colleagues and counterparts and our Ambassador in Vienna and our special representative on his level. I have to say that I am thankful to a couple of governments that agreed to withdraw their reservations to this candidacy.

But let us reserve the final evaluation until March 7, because we still have some formal time for objections.

Mr. CARDIN. I hope it works out.

There is one subject we have not covered today but I want to make sure I at least put on the record, because it is extremely high priority for our mission. That is the compliance with the war crimes tribunal and the apprehension of the indictees that have not yet been turned over to The Hague.

Just to report to you that we did have discussions in Brussels with our representatives at NATO and other countries in NATO and underscored the importance of this subject. I am just pleased to report I think there is an understanding of how important it is for the indictees to be turned over to The Hague, and that plans are still very active in that regard. Anything OSCE can do to complement and work in reinforcing that message is going to be very welcomed.

Min. PASSY. Thank you very much. You can rely on the chairmanship in this respect.

You certainly know that OSCE is very active on the Balkans and this is proven even by the fact that 60 percent of our budget is invested in the Balkans. We have six missions in five countries, so these missions are tasked to cooperate and during this Chairmanship they will be encouraged to cooperate in this respect—strongly encouraged.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Cardin.

Dr. Passy, again, we are fortunate to have—or the OSCE is fortunate to have you as the Chair-in-Office. This Commission looks forward to working with you. We are again grateful to have you here, but more importantly to have you in that very strategic position.

Thank you to your colleagues for being here.

I know you have to get over to the State Department, so we will have to adjourn the hearing, although we have many more questions.

Min. PASSY. Thank you very much.

It is more than a pleasure to work with the Helsinki Commission here in Washington. If you permit me now to change my hat and switch from the OSCE to national capacity, will you allow me to recognize the efforts of your Commission by offering our special medal, which is to recognize the 100th anniversary of the American-Bulgarian diplomatic relations to you both, the Chairman and the Co-Chairman of the Commission

Mr. SMITH. This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:45 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

**PREPARED STATEMENT OF
HON. BEN NIGHORSE CAMPBELL, CO-CHAIRMAN,
COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE**

Mr. Chairman, it is appropriate that the Commission's first hearing of 2004 should feature Bulgarian Foreign Minister Passy in his capacity as Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). It is important that the Commission maintain good lines of communications with the political leadership of the organization, as we seek to encourage participating States to abide by their OSCE commitments. Minister, I am pleased to welcome you to the Commission and appreciate the emphasis you intend to place on implementation during your chairmanship.

As President Gerald Ford observed in signing the Helsinki Final Act, "history will judge this Conference not by what we say here today, but by what we do tomorrow—not only the promises we make, but by the promises we keep."

Your presence here today is an illustration of the impact that the Helsinki Process has had for millions of individuals who lived under the yoke of brutal regimes. Bulgaria's national experience makes it uniquely positioned to aid those in the OSCE region who have yet to be freed from repression. In the extreme are cases such as Turkmenistan and Belarus, where unchecked dictators use the full force of the state to repress expressions of opposition. The same can be said for others in Central Asia who blatantly disregard their OSCE commitments.

Russia presents a very mixed picture. This Commission has attempted to keep a focus on the deplorable human dimension of the war in Chechnya now stretching into its fifth year. Chairman Smith and I recently co-authored an op-ed published in Moscow on Russia and the OSCE. Frankly, it is confounding why the Russians are not playing a productive role in the organization. The OSCE provides an ideal framework for advancing democracy, human rights and the rule of law—one that the Russians should embrace.

Ukraine also is a tough nut, especially with respect to democratization and rule of law. With critical elections slated for this Fall, there are already enough disturbing developments to warrant our concern and attention. This Commission will continue to press Kiev to implement its OSCE commitments, throughout the election period and beyond.

Mr. Minister, as you lead the OSCE, please don't discount the positive role Bulgaria can and should play in advancing the principles that ultimately freed you countrymen from repression.

As the Senate sponsor of a resolution passed earlier this Congress condemning anti-Semitism and advocating a special OSCE focus on this phenomenon, I appreciate your leadership in preparing for the follow-up conference to be convened in Berlin in April. Anti-Semitism and related violence cannot and must not be ignored.

Mr. Minister, as the OSCE approaches its 30th anniversary, we would do well to heed President Ford's admonishment. Bulgaria has a unique opportunity to lead by example. Bulgaria has come a long way and we look forward to continued efforts to overcome the legacy of the past, including protecting the rights of minorities, including the Roma, and instituting appropriate safeguards to prevent arms transfers to rogue regimes, including Syria.

Mr. Minister, I wish you success in the challenging months ahead. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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