

SLOVENIA'S LEADERSHIP OF THE OSCE

HEARING BEFORE THE COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE ONE HUNDRED NINTH CONGRESS

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SLOVENIA'S LEADERSHIP OF THE OSCE

MARCH 8, 2005

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE
WASHINGTON, DC

The hearing was held at 3 p.m. in room 192, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC, Senator Sam Brownback, Chairman, presiding.

Commissioners present: Hon. Sam Brownback, Chairman; Hon. Christopher H. Smith, Co-Chairman; and Hon. Benjamin L. Cardin, Ranking Member.

Witness present: His Excellency Dimitrij Rupel, Chairman-in-Office, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

HON. SAM BROWNBACK, CHAIRMAN, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Sen. BROWNBACK. I call the hearing to order. Thank you all for joining us this afternoon.

Dr. Rupel, thank you very much for being here with us as well. I welcome you to the Commission and to the U.S. Senate.

Also, recently I took over as chairman of the Helsinki Commission, so I look forward to hearing your comments, in your capacity as Chairman of the OSCE.

I would also like to welcome my colleagues here from the House, Co-Chairman Smith, House colleagues, Congressman Cardin that's here as well, others that will be joining us perhaps as we go along through the hearing. We all share the common objectives of the Helsinki Accords and our pursuit of promoting democracy, advancing respect for human rights and fostering economic prosperity.

We live in truly remarkable times. I didn't think it would be possible to do one better than the fall of the Berlin wall, but in recent years, months and even weeks, we've seen things happening in countries like Georgia and Ukraine that have inspired the world.

The ground is also shifting dramatically in the Middle East: in Iraq, where I came back from just 10 days ago; the changes at the top of the Palestinian authority; and, more recently, in Lebanon.

Many of these remarkable events are the result of the enduring legacy of the principles embodied in the Helsinki Final Act, signed nearly 30 years ago in the middle of the Cold War.

And Ukraine and Georgia—they are also the direct result of the work by the OSCE field missions on the ground and hundreds of other NGOs and thousands—millions—of ordinary citizens stepping forward and putting their voice forth for democracy and freedom.

Our work, however, is far from finished. Countries like Belarus are more repressive than ever before.

Trends in the countries of Central Asia are also disappointing when you consider that four of the presidents from the region personally signed on to the promises of the Final Act when their countries joined the OSCE in 1992.

The Russian Federation has yet to fully honor the commitments it made at the 1999 OSCE summit to withdraw its military forces from Moldova and Georgia.

Moscow has repeatedly failed to play a constructive role, most recently by blocking continuation of the OSCE border monitoring mission along the Georgian border with the Chechen region of Russia.

I'm also concerned about Russia's attempts to strong-arm the OSCE organization to water down its commitments on democracy and to back off its election monitoring activities.

As Moscow is writing off billions of dollars of past debt from Syria, a state sponsor of terrorism, it's fighting to avoid contributing its own assessments of support for OSCE operations.

While I would like to see us work toward breaking the impasse, the OSCE should not accept Russia's proposal to slash or to avoid its contribution. We have proposals before the Russians, and we should wait to hear, rather than accept their demands under pressure.

Meanwhile, there is a full agenda of issues that deserve our attention, from human trafficking to anti-Semitism to corruption and religious and ethnic discrimination in the OSCE countries.

In addition to these important issues, it is time that the organization starts to deal with emerging threats from both within and outside the OSCE region.

And finally, we cannot afford to ignore threats to the OSCE region which stretches from Vancouver to Vladivostok that are posed by rogue regimes, such as North Korea, Iran, and Syria. I'm particularly concerned over links between some OSCE participating States and these state sponsors of terrorism.

Mr. Minister, the important work that the OSCE states and the organization needs to accomplish is too important to be held hostage by a few members and divisive issues, such as OSCE monitoring of elections or other issues coming forward.

The resources of the OSCE is already limited and stretched beyond its capacity.

If the current impasse in Vienna cannot be resolved behind closed doors, then the matter will have to be dealt with directly and openly and at the highest political level.

Ultimately, the strength of the OSCE is found in the promises of our countries that they have made to each other. If we focus our energies on keeping those promises, then all our countries and their own people will benefit.

I'd like to turn to Commission Co-Chairman Mr. Smith for his remarks.

Congressman Smith?

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

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to congratulate you on your appointment as Chairman of the Commission

on Security and Cooperation in Europe. You've been a long-time member of this Commission, and it's so great to have you as chair for these upcoming 2 years.

I also want to express and extend a very warm welcome to the Foreign Minister, the new OSCE Chair-in-Office, Slovenian Foreign Minister Rupel.

Dr. Rupel, the Commission has benefited greatly from interaction with your Ambassador to the United States, Samuel Zbogar, and the Slovenian Ambassador to the OSCE, Janez Lenarcic, whom I met while I was in Vienna the week before last.

The Commission appreciates the day-to-day contact with representatives of your fine diplomatic corps, both here and in Vienna.

I share the deep concern already expressed about the efforts by the Russian Federation to cripple the OSCE.

As President Bush said at his Bratislava press conference with President Putin, "Democracies have a rule of law and provide protection of minorities, a free press and a viable political opposition."

The ascensions of a free and fair election based on OSCE commitments must continue to support the will of the people and not the interests of those seeking to maintain their self-enriching hold on power.

Frankly, many of us were very concerned about the OSCE undertaking a review of current election standards at the request of the countries clearly not interested in a free press or a viable opposition.

The conflict in Chechnya continues, and we face the threat of conflict in Kosovo.

I would note, parenthetically, that we all know that the Kosovar Prime Minister has recently been indicted on war crimes by The Hague, on March 8.

I would say to my friend, the Foreign Minister, when it comes to acts of terrorism, by withholding the consensus on the OSCE mission in Chechnya, Moscow has not only raised questions about its own responsibility for the situation, but it makes us wonder if there is a desire to find a real, durable solution and one that respects fundamental human rights in that region.

The recent denial of consensus by Russia to OSCE border monitoring in Georgia, similarly, raises questions about Russia's commitment to building confidence in the security of participating States.

Mr. Chairman, I would also hope that the failure of the recent elections in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to meet OSCE elections standards does not calm the new wave of democratic change we have witnessed most recently in peaceful public protests of the Orange Revolution.

I would note, parenthetically, that some of us were recently in Kiev—Mr. Ben Cardin and I and members of the staff—and were greatly moved by this ongoing exuberance for democracy expressed by the Ukrainians. They have high hopes and high expectations. Many of us believe that those expectations will be met.

The OSCE must penetrate its deep roots on the side of democratic rule. It must reach out to those seeking change in every country where there is a conflict under way, where there are opposition parties trying to make their demands known, and hopefully,

get their candidates on the ballot and to have a free and fair election.

Elsewhere, Dr. Rupel, you have highlighted your concerns about the risks in Kosovo this year and the implications for much of Southeastern Europe, in which the OSCE has invested significant time and resources.

I welcome your unique perspective in the region. Again, I advocate upholding OSCE's standards in Kosovo regardless of its status. We need to see much more progress in the return process, in freedom of movement and in opportunity for cooperation across ethnic lines.

As you know, Mr. Foreign Minister, this Commission has also been very active on the issue of human trafficking, both in terms of our own legislative initiatives, as well as trying to get other OSCE countries to do their fair share in stopping this horrific modern-day slavery as it occurs in the OSCE region.

We've also been at the lead, trying to ensure that the rising tide of anti-Semitism is not only mitigated but halted. We have it within our power, if there is a political will, to stop this ugly specter of anti-Semitism from claiming more actions of violence against Jews, as well as other types of defamation like swastikas on buildings and the overturning of gravestones in Jewish cemeteries.

I would hope that if you would spend some time in your statement regarding efforts to combat anti-Semitism, it would be greatly appreciated.

Mr. Chairman, I would ask that my full statement be made part of the record, and again, thank you for convening this hearing.

Sen. BROWNBACK. Without objection, it will be in the record.
Congressman Cardin?

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

Mr. CARDIN. Let me first thank Senator Brownback for calling this hearing and thank Dr. Rupel for being with us.

Senator Brownback, it's a pleasure to have you as the chairman of our Commission and I look forward, from the Democratic side, to continuing to work in partnership to further the U.S. participation in the OSCE. We think this is an extremely important responsibility, and we look forward to working with you on this committee.

Dr. Rupel, I first want to thank you for spending so much time at the parliamentary assembly in Vienna. I thought that their discussions were very helpful, very frank discussions. And we very much appreciate your participation with the parliamentary assembly.

And I recall our last visit when you were in Washington and the time you spent with us.

So we thank you for being so accessible to our Commission.

This is the 30th anniversary of this organization. It's gone through transformation over that period of time, and it's right for us to expect a review of the procedures.

For anyone who questions the importance of the OSCE, all you needed to do was be with Chris Smith and myself when we were in Kiev 2 weeks ago and see what happened with the Orange Revo-

lution. You'll see the importance of the OSCE monitoring of elections and establishing standards for fair and open elections, to know how countries can change and human rights can really prevail under the umbrella of the OSCE.

So the OSCE is more relevant today than, I think, 30 years ago and more important today. Congressman Smith mentioned the anti-Semitism, the results of the Berlin conference and then the results of the Brussels conference and documents that came out of both of those meetings demonstrate that even though we have a cumbersome process of consensus, we are able to move forward on very important issues that affect the stability of the member states.

So as you are looking at the review of the OSCE—I know that you've used the term "rebalance," and I asked you about that term in Vienna, and I was pleased to hear you say that you're looking at strengthening the different components of the OSCE. And I completely agree with you.

I, personally, believe—and Senator Brownback and I were talking just before your testimony today about what are our priorities. And I mentioned, first, human rights, because I believe the way member states participate with human rights of their citizens is key toward their relationship within the OSCE.

And the human dimension has by far been the hallmark, I think, of the OSCE process.

But I want to spend at least a moment talking about the subject that's important to me, because I chair the second committee of the OSCE, on economics and environment, and I was very pleased to see in the Maastricht document a commitment to really modernize and move forward our commitment on the economic and environmental front, and particularly, our effort to combat corruption.

As I mentioned in Vienna and I'm mentioning again today, I think we need to strengthen the capacity within OSCE to help member states as it relates to dealing with fighting corruption within their own country.

In Kiev, we saw firsthand the effects of corruption. I tried to find out whether different groups being discriminated against through corruption in Kiev, and I found that their corruption was not discriminatory; they're corrupt against everyone in that country.

But we need to help that nation. And they want to—that's the top priority of their new government—is to fight corruption. They need the help from the OSCE. They need the capacity within the OSCE. So I look forward to your suggestions as to how we can strengthen the capacity within the OSCE to help our member states.

One suggestion that I made is to upgrade the status of the OSCE coordinator for economic and environmental activities. That position is going to be vacated, and it's going to be filled with a new appointment. And I think that upgrading that capacity of that position could help in this regard.

One additional point I want to share with you, and that is I know that you share our interest in looking beyond the OSCE states, in regards to the OSCE.

We have our Mediterranean partners, and we have, I think, constructively engaged the partners, particularly within the Mediterranean.

As we look at progress being made in the Middle East with peace, with the elections within the Palestinian authority, I think there's an incredible opportunity within the OSCE to expand the participation of our Mediterranean partners and use the OSCE principles to advance peace in the Middle East and economic activities within the Middle East.

And I want you to know that there's great interest within our Commission. We held a hearing on that specific subject last June or July, if memory serves me correctly, and there was tremendous support for increasing the participation of the Mediterranean partners in the OSCE.

So for all these reasons, I welcome your leadership. We want you to know that we stand with you. We know that you have a difficult time in dealing with 55 member states and getting consensus.

We would like to see the process a lot more transparent.

We would like to see it easier for you to move forward, particularly on procedural issues.

And we look forward to, not only your testimony today, but working with you to carry out the commitments of strengthening the OSCE.

Sen. BROWNBACK. Thank you, Congressman.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Chairman, I would ask that my full statement be placed in the record.

Sen. BROWNBACK. Without objection.

And I want to thank you, Congressman Cardin, and Congressman Smith for the years that both of you have invested membership here and before.

Congressman Cardin worked on the Soviet Jewry movement many years ago, before being in Congress, and has a long legacy. Congressman Smith has been the lead proponent on efforts to combat trafficking here in the Congress, and I would argue around the world as well. And they both carry great credentials, both in writing and in their hearts. They just do a great job.

Mr. Minister, Dr. Rupel, what an exciting time to be the head of the OSCE, of seeing profound changes taking place around the world. I would think you'd be a kid in a candy shop right now with seeing all of these opportunities and things happening.

I was flying out of Germany when the Lebanese were protesting in the streets, and I looked at the images on the screen and for a moment I thought I was looking at the Ukraine, because it looked so much alike, of people taking power and standing up for democracy.

And I just think it's an exciting moment for OSCE and for the democracy movement, and delighted to have you here.

I'm happy to receive your statement now.

**HIS EXCELLENCY DIMITRIJ RUPEL, CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE,
ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN
EUROPE**

Dr. RUPEL. Thank you, Senator Brownback, Congressman Smith, Congressman Cardin, distinguished Members of the U.S. Congress and the Helsinki Commission, ladies and gentlemen.

Thank you for the opportunity to address this hearing.

The work of the Helsinki Commission has been a vital element of the CSCE process and for keeping the spotlight on the link between human rights and security. You also played a key role in raising awareness of the OSCE in the United States.

Your work is vital, more vital today, perhaps, than ever.

The OSCE seems to be under attack. Some critics, even heads of state, are questioning its relevance, its way of implementing decisions, its approach to election monitoring and accusing it of double standards.

Russia, in particular, is outspoken, although not alone in its criticisms. As a result, the mandate of border-monitoring operation in Georgia was not extended at the end of last year. There was no consensus on a common declaration, as the ministerial council at Sofia in December, for the second year in a row.

And we still do not have a 2005 budget, and there is no agreement on scheduled contributions.

Is the OSCE in crisis? Well, the situation is not ideal, but perhaps it's an opportunity to get some things out in the open that have been festering for a while.

But let me emphasize this: Internal difficulties in the OSCE should not avert our regard to the problems in the world out there.

And another introductory statement: People today do not dismiss the OSCE because it would not be successful. Some of the criticism comes from the quarters that have found OSCE as too successful.

Not everyone will agree with the criticism of the Russian Federation and some members of the Commonwealth of Independent States, but their views should not be ignored or dismissed.

I personally do not believe that the OSCE practices double standards. But you have to address the perception among some countries that it does, that countries west of Vienna are teachers with a license to lecture the pupils, and under quotation marks, "East of Vienna."

That is not to say that we should lower our standards or erode our common principles, but you have to maintain a cooperative spirit.

I, therefore, welcome the debate on strengthening the OSCE.

I have appointed a panel of eminent persons to review the effectiveness of the organization and provide strategic vision for the OSCE in the future. Their recommendations will come out at the end of June. There is also a working group on reform and a group looking at improving the functioning and effectiveness of OSCE field operations.

At the Sofia ministerial council, a decision was taken that ratifies and strengthens the role of secretary general. We're currently in the process of selecting a new secretary general to succeed Jan Kubis, I hope to make that appointment in the spring.

Since the United States, particularly this Commission, is so supportive of the OSCE, I urge you to ensure that America's commitment is made clear at the highest level.

I spoke with Secretary of State Rice yesterday and said how useful it was for her and the President to lay out so clearly, during their recent visits to Europe, the importance of the European Union-United States relations and the vision that the United States has for NATO.

The same needs to be done for the OSCE. The future of this organization and what it stands for should not be taken for granted.

I'm concerned that in this year, when we should be celebrating 30 years since the signing of the Helsinki Final Act and 15 years since the Charter of Paris, we're hearing echoes of cold war rhetoric. At a time when we should be celebrating the OSCE's good work in building security through cooperation, it appears that the common ground on which we stand, may be shrinking.

We must avoid the re-opening of divisions in Europe and avoid any backsliding of progress that has been made in recent years. The OSCE is absolutely instrumental in this process.

The OSCE parliamentary assembly annual session that will take place here in Washington in July will be a good opportunity to raise the OSCE's profile and to reaffirm its importance. I urge this Commission to lend its backing to that event.

If you can encourage senior members of the executive branch to participate, so much the better.

I know that I'm preaching to the converted here when I underline the importance of the OSCE as a vital means of promoting security through cooperation in the region from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

Its comprehensive approach to security is more valid than ever, linking human rights; social, economic and environmental issues and the political/military dimensions.

Security is so much more than hard security. The OSCE demonstrates why and how situations need to be looked at holistically.

The OSCE is an effective multilateral forum, essential for bringing states together and seeking common solutions to common problems.

This is vital in our interdependent world, where threats to security defy national boundaries, and insecurity in one part of the world can have an effect on us all. Ladies and gentlemen, Senators, Congressmen, the OSCE is geared to preventing conflict and to post-conflict rehabilitation.

In Moldova, the situation concerning trans-Dniester remains frozen.

But I'm hopeful that the recent developments in Ukraine, and the conclusions of elections in Moldova—which the OSCE has closely monitored—will usher in a new opportunity to kickstart the settlement process.

I intend to travel to Moldova next week.

In Georgia, we remain the lead organization for seeking a settlement to the conflict in South Ossetia, and could do more with the United Nations in Abkhazia concerning the protection and promotion of human rights.

We remain engaged with the Georgian authorities to assist them in their process of democratization. It is disappointing that our successful border-monitoring operation was not extended. But we will seek to answer Georgia's request for training for the guards. Concerning Nagorno-Karabakh, the Minsk process is back on track through high level discussions between the foreign ministries of Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Recently, a fact-finding mission under OSCE auspices visited the occupied territories of Azerbaijan to clarify the situation on the ground.

Of course, much depends on the continued democratization in both countries, a process that the OSCE actively supports.

For that reason, we were alarmed by the recent murder of Azeri journalist Elmar Huseynov. This is the latest example of censorship by killing which, like the case of Georgi Gongadza in Ukraine in 2000, is a despicable practice and one which is a serious threat to freedom of the media.

Belarus, you have mentioned yourself, Senator, has a clear democracy deficiency. The leadership seems to be pushing itself into further isolation and the OSCE is one of its few remaining links with the international community.

The position of the United States is clear through the Belarus Democracy Act, and the Secretary of State's description of Belarus as, I quote, "an outpost of tyranny," end of quote.

Given the fact that the OSCE is a consensus-based, intergovernmental organization, I must be more cautious. But I can say that we have expressed our concerns about the clamp-down on civil society, the rule of law and human rights.

And we will continue to work with the Belarusian authorities to ensure respect for OSCE commitments. I plan to be in Minsk in the next two months.

This is, Senator, Congressman, an important year for Kosovo where the OSCE is a major player.

I recently visited Pristina and Belgrade and emphasized the OSCE's commitment to a peaceful and sustainable settlement in a way that ensures representative government and the protection and the promotion of human rights, particularly the rights of persons belonging to national minorities.

We also must consider the socioeconomic angle. Unemployment, particularly among young people, is running at more than 50 percent. This is not sustainable. And it's a dangerous ingredient in the cocktail of political insecurity and ethnic mistrust.

There is still plenty of work to do and some tough decisions to make for the international community, countries of the region and, first and foremost, all people living in Kosovo.

The international community, including the OSCE, needs to be engaged and to move forward the comprehensive review of standards in order to resolve one of Europe's most crucial security issues.

In Southeastern Europe, as a whole, things are definitely going in the right direction. The pull of the E.U. and the support of NATO, the United States and the Stability Pact, among others, have been important for stabilizing the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

But the shoots of democracy are still frail and they need steady and long-term support. For its part, the OSCE, particularly through its missions, is continuing its important work in a range of areas supporting capacity building and interstate cooperation on war crimes proceedings, protecting minority rights and strengthening inter-ethnic integration, the refugee return, police training,

assisting with legal reform, border management, as well as elections.

The OSCE is one of the few international organizations that is present and active across Central Asia. I recently visited Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, and will visit the rest of the region in mid-April.

I believe that this region deserves special attention, which is why I have appointed former Slovenian Prime Minister Alojz Peterle to be my personal representative in Central Asia to augment the work of OSCE centers and institutions.

Our work in Central Asia is very much designed to support the regimes in their processes of democratization. We are also paying special attention to migration, human rights education and border management.

Elections are also a high priority. For example, the OSCE has recently monitored elections in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Some states in the region may not be reforming as quickly as many of us would like. But I believe that it is important to remain constructively engaged and to offer a hand of support rather than only pointing fingers.

While it is important to promote regional cooperation, which is badly lacking, we must also be careful to look at the individual situations in each country.

The situation in Central Asia cannot be considered without looking at the impact of developments in neighboring Afghanistan. Just as instability in Afghanistan had a dangerous effect on security in Central Asia, stability and democracy in Afghanistan can reduce the risk of extremism, trafficking and trans-border instability spilling over into the region. The deployment of an election support team to Afghanistan during the presidential elections in last October was an important step for the OSCE. I believe that we should build on it and respond positively to Foreign Minister Abdullah's invitation to play a similar role in the parliamentary elections, as well as looking at other ways of increasing cooperation with this important partner for cooperation.

I believe that fostering closer relations with Mongolia, our newest partner, can also add to the richness of the OSCE's work in Eurasia.

Senator, Congressmen, ladies, gentlemen, friends, the vital importance of the OSCE's human dimension is not something that I need to convince this Commission of.

Election monitoring in Ukraine has again demonstrated the OSCE's leading work in this field. We can all be proud of the excellent work of the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in mobilizing more than 1,000 observers over the Christmas period for the rerun of the second round of Presidential elections.

That being said, there may be ways that we could further enhance our election monitoring activities. I'm open to the idea of creating a working group on this subject. But I stress that this should build on our existing achievements, not water them down.

Following on from last year's successful and high-profile OSCE conferences on anti-Semitism and racism, xenophobia and discrimination, three special representatives have been appointed to en-

hance the OSCE's work in combating intolerance and discrimination. This is important work.

Senator Brownback, in your letter of invitation you asked me to identify emerging internal and external threats to the OSCE region.

As you may be aware, at the Maastricht Ministerial Council in December 2003, ministers agreed on an OSCE strategy to address threats to security and stability in the 21st century.

In that respect, I believe that we're 2 years ahead of the U.N. Panel on Threat, Challenges and Change, and are already well-equipped and well-positioned to address the threats that were identified.

These threats include inter- and intra-state conflicts; terrorism; organized crime, including trafficking; discrimination and intolerance; migration and immigration; deepening economic and social disparities and environmental degradation; and threats of a political/military nature.

Allow me to elaborate on a few of these.

The OSCE is doing important work in counterterrorism, promoting the implementation of existing commitments, carrying out concrete projects and ensuring that counterterrorism efforts respect human rights.

This year, the OSCE is joining international efforts to strengthen container security.

Borders are, to some extent, losing their significance. At the same time, borders still matter and their security needs to be effectively managed. That is why the OSCE is paying increased attention to border management and security.

In the political/military dimension, a proposal has been made for the OSCE to host a seminar on military doctrine.

I believe that this is timely, and the OSCE is the ideal place to discuss this topic. Disarmament, arms control and confidence-building measures have long been central elements of the OSCE's work, and the CFE and Open Skies are within the framework of the OSCE.

Bearing in mind the changes in the world order, technology and warfare, it would be useful to compare notes on contemporary military doctrines.

This year, as a matter of priority, the OSCE's Forum for Security Cooperation will pay significant attention to the implementation of decisions aimed at strengthening the control of participating States for the export and trafficking of small arms and light weapons, including MANPADs.

The OSCE will also engage in concrete projects designed to assist participating States in improving the management, security and destruction of surpluses of small arms and conventional ammunition stockpiles.

As always, the annual security review conference will be an excellent opportunity to exchange views on these and other political/military issues. Through the implementation of the OSCE strategy document for the economic and environmental dimension, we are enhancing development, security and stability by, for example, looking at ways to strengthen good governance, assuring sustainable development, protecting the environment, improving early

warning and early action, and reviewing the implementation of commitments.

Senator, Congressmen, the OSCE is a leader in anti-trafficking. This year, we are paying special attention to the high-risk category of child victims of trafficking. Policing is an ideal issue for the OSCE. It combines security and human rights. Good policing has a vital role to play in the prevention of conflicts, the preservation of Social Stability during political crises, and the post-conflict rehabilitation of societies.

Without effective law enforcement, respect for the rule of law and the operation of institutions responsible for upholding it, there can be little likelihood of social, political or economic development in any state.

The OSCE runs police development units in Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Serbia-Montenegro, including Kosovo.

A police assistance program has been launched in Kyrgyzstan, and others are in preparation in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

No other international organization currently possesses the potential to strengthen long-term law enforcement capacity and institution-building in the OSCE region, the states most susceptible to crime, corruption and human rights violations.

The United States has seconded many excellent police officers to assist us in our work and I am grateful for your support.

Senators, Congressmen, unlike 30 years ago when the CSE was launched, or even 15 years ago when the Charter of Paris was signed, some of the most dangerous threats to security to OSCE states come from outside the OSCE area.

The OSCE deals with the symptoms of these threats: trafficking, hate crimes, terrorism, but its role in dealing with the causes is limited.

Nevertheless, we are not powerless.

First thing, the OSCE can work to ensure that its commitments are universally applied within the OSCE area.

I think, for example, it is healthy when the United States is challenged in the permanent council on aspects of its human dimension, or when the OSCE sends election monitors to the United States as we did in 2004.

This sent an important signal that mature democracies have nothing to hide and they're open to learn.

Second, we can try to share our values and expertise with others outside OSCE area.

As I mentioned, last autumn, we were active in Afghanistan, had been invited to support the forthcoming parliamentary elections. In January, we sent an assessment mission to see what help we could offer the Palestinian Authority for elections. Regional and sub-regional organizations from around the world asked us for advice.

In short, we fulfill our role as a regional arrangement of the United Nations and try to share with others the merit of building security through cooperation.

Members of Congress and the Commission, this is an exciting year for the OSCE, both because we are marking significant anniversaries, and because of the profound changes that the organization is going through.

Europe is in transition. The security architecture is being reconstructed.

NATO, the E.U., the Council of Europe, and the United Nations are in transition.

Strengthening the OSCE is not an end in itself; it is a necessity based on contemporary realities.

We should not become bogged down in the self-obsessed debate on reform. We need to see how the OSCE can most effectively deal with the real challenges of today that affect the lives of real people.

And that is where you can help. Bring the OSCE to the attention of your constituents and your peers. Use the parliamentary assembly and all other channels to make the OSCE stronger.

On August 1, 1975, U.S. President Gerald Ford told other heads of state gathered in Helsinki, and I quote, "The nations assembled here have kept the general peace in Europe for 30 years, yet there have been too many narrow escapes from major conflict. There remains, to this day, the urgent issue of how to construct a just and lasting peace for all peoples," end of quotation.

The world has changed dramatically in the past three decades, but the need to build a lasting peace for all peoples remains the same.

As the anti-slavery campaigner Wendell Philips said, "The price of peace is eternal vigilance."

The OSCE stands on guard for you.

Thank you for your attention.

Sen. BROWNBACK. Thank you, Dr. Rupel. And I thank you for your comments.

We'll run a time clock here of 7 minutes, if you don't mind having a round or two of questions.

What's your timeframe? How long can you spend with us here?

Dr. RUPEL. As long as you want me.

Sen. BROWNBACK. You shouldn't say that to Members of Congress, but that's appreciated nonetheless.

Would you care, and I realize some of these countries are outside of really your purview and outside of the OSCE—but it has just been dramatic what has taken place in the Middle East within the last month: of course, in Lebanon, that mentioned; Palestinian Authority elections; President Mubarak in Egypt saying he will stand for multiparty elections; Saudis having local elections, albeit really questionable.

I did find it interesting, one Saudi official said, "Well, of course, sometime in the future women will vote." We'll see how soon.

And I realize a lot of that's outside of your region of direct focus and chairmanship, but you must be profoundly encouraged there—Iraqi elections that take place. Does that signal for you the clear march of democracy moving forward in another region of the world, that being in the Middle East?

Dr. RUPEL. Well, if I had the possibility to answer with one word, I would say yes.

Certainly, the Middle East is close to our region, the region that is covered by the OSCE. Certainly, we have managed to start our involvement in the region, so to say, beyond our borders, south of Southern Europe, actually.

We have, as I have said, sent delegations and missions to Palestine. We have been involved in the peace process, although quite marginally; we have not been the principal players in that region.

But I think that in due time there will be in the future, maybe in the very near future, a need to get involved more.

And I think that this would be completely in accord with the nature of our organization to get involved.

Of course, to get involved in any region and to do anything in the OSCE we need consensus, we need to consult, we need to reach, well, consensus of all our participating States.

I feel encouraged, as I have said—and, well, I repeat what you have said actually—by the democratic processes.

There is a great hope around, and also around and within the OSCE, that the initial steps taken by Israel, by the Palestine Authority, by the international community mean, of course, an overture to a lasting peace arrangement. OSCE shouldn't stay away from that, as it shouldn't stay away from other hot spots, so to say. I agree with the central accent in your question. Yes, I think that democracy is progressing and that the OSCE has a role in this.

Thank you.

Sen. BROWNBACK. Mr. Rupel, I wanted to direct your focus and your comments on the current impasse and difficulty in dealing with the Russians on your budget and on election monitoring, field missions.

What has been the nature of your private conversations, to the degree you can reveal the thrust of those, in talking with the Russians about these issues?

We hear much about it in the media, but I would appreciate your thoughts about where these discussions have been and where they are going with the Russians regarding the OSCE.

Dr. RUPEL. Well, Senator, the Russian Federation is one of the members of the OSCE, one of the founding members of the OSCE.

And of course, all discussions with the Russian Federation are extremely important. And we in the chairmanship dedicate a lot of attention to whatever the Russian Federation has to say.

I have received some of the solutions, some of the, let's say, framework of the problem that we are trying to deal with now, from the previous chairmanship.

My predecessor has not succeeded to finalize what he started to do and what I wish he had concluded. But this is what is the situation.

So I started my talks, my discussions with our Russian friends already, personally, the first of February, when I visited Moscow and had a meeting with my colleague Mr. Lavrov.

I felt encouraged by certain elements in his part of the dialogue and some not completely changed, but slightly modified ideas followed regarding the budget, regarding the scales of contribution.

We got that in writing. I responded.

And now we are in the process of restudying the proposals from the Russian Federation, and we have also proposed some new modifications.

Let me tell you, Senator, that I have initiated an informal meeting in Vienna that included also the utmost representatives of the Russian Federation and the United States of America. We have

discussed the issue of scales of contribution and of the budget, and we agreed that solutions must be found.

I have a hope, Senator, that maybe in 2 or 3 weeks, we shall come to a stage when we shall be able to say that we have resolved our main disagreements or main problems regarding this internal functioning of the OSCE.

Now, certainly, we shall not stop our discussions. And I am afraid our disagreement or our difference will not stop in two or three weeks, because we shall talk also about other things that I have indicated I found more important, even more important than this case of contribution or budgetary matters.

Sen. BROWNBACK. Thank you.

As I look at it now as Chairman here and then outside, I don't think this shines a light very well on Russia. I don't think this is, in my estimation, a good place for them to put themselves, as far as in this budget impasse or as far as in the difficulties it's causing the OSCE.

I understand they have particular issues that they're concerned with, but the march of democracy and human rights and open societies is moving forward. And that's clearly the trend line of history. And that's clearly where we're headed to.

And I think those who are on that side will shine brightest and those who are against it, it will not show well in history's hindsight.

Congressman Smith?

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

Chairman-in-Office, Dr. Rupel, I do welcome your comments about not watering down the standards for elections and for monitoring of elections.

It seems to me that when you mentioned echoes of Cold War rhetoric, most of that, if not all of it, is coming from the Russian side, and we have problems.

I noticed in your op-ed you indicated that the Western democracies are not flawless when it comes to human rights records. We're the first to admit that.

When Abu Ghraib was uncovered—and it was uncovered by a whistleblower within the military—several investigations were initiated and people have gone to jail—several people, one for 10 years—for that degrading and humiliating treatment meted out against Iraqi prisoners.

When there's a problem, you bring the full light of scrutiny, bring charges and mete out genuine jail time to those who commit those kinds of atrocities.

I actually offered a resolution at the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Scotland bringing attention to the whole problem of mistreatment of detainees at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo and saying that there is zero tolerance when it comes to torture.

One problem I have with the Russians—and I share my good friend and colleague Mr. Brownback's concerns—is that they're pushing back.

And we saw it most recently in Ukraine, when they were very much on the other side of that election, supporting the other candidate. And they certainly are entitled to their prerogative, but

when free and fair doesn't mean free and fair, they shouldn't say the rules are somehow flawed.

So I would hope that as you go forward, as you indicated to us, there will be no watering down of those commitments.

ODIHR and the OSCE have had a tremendous record when it comes to election monitoring. Just because the Russians don't like the outcome doesn't mean you change the rules, because they certainly have tried to do that.

Some specific questions on human trafficking: At the Sofia Ministerial, as you know, there was an effort made to agree by consensus to a provision dealing with peacekeeping.

This Commission has been very, very aggressive in promoting within our own government, within the OSCE, within NATO and within the United Nations a zero tolerance when it comes to peacekeepers' complicity in trafficking and the exploitation of young people, which is a heinous crime.

You indicated in your testimony the importance of protecting young people against trafficking. And yet that language was blocked in Sofia by 1 country; it was blocked by Russia—54 countries had agreed but the Russians did not.

I would hope that at the next ministerial there will be an all-out effort made to have Russia join the consensus.

Last week I held a 5-hour hearing concerning atrocities committed in the Congo by U.N. peacekeepers. 150 allegations, many of which have been substantiated, against girls as young as 12, 13, and 14, by peacekeepers.

And it seems to me that if the OSCE can't come to an agreement that there is zero tolerance, as we said at the hearing last week, there's zero compliance with zero tolerance in the Congo, and that is unacceptable.

So I would hope you would use your office to try to get an agreement on that.

I also want to raise the issue of anti-Semitism.

The idea for anti-Semitism came right out of our Commission, at a hearing several years ago, when we witnessed and heard from representatives from the Jewish community and others, that there was a rising tide of anti-Semitism occurring in Europe, Canada, and the United States.

It's my understanding that 48 countries have reported back to ODIHR, and the question is: How do you rate the quality of those reports, are they good, fair or middling? Are the countries doing anything of significance when it comes to chronicling their hate crimes?

I would note, in passing, that Gert Weisskirchen is a good friend of this Commission and a very able lawmaker in the Bundestag. I'm very glad that he's the Special Representative on anti-Semitism. Hopefully, he will have a real impact as your Special Representative on this. And finally, when you visit countries, can I implore you to visit the political prisoners as well. If you go to Turkmenistan, for instance, a former OSCE ambassador, Batyr Berdiev, is either in prison or dead. We don't know.

He was Turkmenistan's Ambassador to the OSCE. I would hope that you would raise his case and others when you visit countries.

I remember whenever Secretary Shultz, our former Secretary of State, would go to the Soviet Union he would make it a point to meet with every dissident that he could possibly meet with to convey our concern and solidarity with those seeking democratic reforms.

I would say, parenthetically, that I will have to leave soon to meet with one of your fellow ministers from East Timor, Ramos Horta, who is a Nobel Peace Prize winner. I will be asking him to speak out on behalf of the political prisoners in Cuba.

It pains me that Europe has been so silent, especially on the E.U. decision—I know that's not yours—taken in January, to re-engage the Cuban dictatorship when it comes to exchanges. Seventy-five people were jailed and then, through kangaroo trials, given 25- and 27-year prison sentences. They're all in prison still, except for a few who have been let out for humanitarian reasons. These are the best, the bravest and brightest of Cuba.

I do think there's a place for the Chair-in-Office and for the OSCE, especially given Europe's special relationship with Cuba, and its often criticisms of the U.S. Government's embargo.

OK, that's a policy decision. But, when it comes to the people fighting for freedom, librarians, people with the Varela Project and others, they are all being rounded up, and they have been given horrible jail sentences as a result.

That's something that I would ask you to take a look at as well. I have the prisoners list for you.

Dr. RUPEL. Thank you, Congressman. I should try to be as brief as possible.

Now, human trafficking is one of priorities of Slovenian chairmanship. I expect to meet Helga Konrad, who is special representative on this particular issue, very soon in Ghana. I intend to discuss the issue, as well as all other issues regarding trafficking on human beings in the OSCE region with her.

I indeed commend you on the work you are doing in this respect, and we shall try to continue or add to the effort that you have mentioned.

Regarding the OSCE efforts to fight anti-Semitism: Now, during the spring and summer of 2002, Europe witnessed a significant increase in anti-Semitic violence.

Well, the situation has improved. There are consistent, sporadic incidents that continue to arise throughout the 55 participating States of OSCE including this country.

Last month, a small-circulation Russian newspaper published a vicious anti-Semitic manifesto entitled "Jewish Happiness, Russian Tears." It was reportedly signed by approximately 500 members of Russian society and a handful of representatives from the Russian state Duma.

Now later, Duma passed a resolution condemning the letter and the Russian Government disavowed it.

At the Cordoba conference that we are planning, the focus will be, not only on the continuation of progress made during the Berlin Conference, but there will also be an effort to build on the progress during the Brussels Conference in other OSCE tolerance-related meetings.

I believe the main focus of the Cordoba conference should be to move from commitment, set into implementation, and to discuss concrete actions in this regard taken so far by participating States.

I see Cordoba as a concrete follow-up rather than a copy of last year's event.

Some countries have made a significant progress in implementing their commitment related to tolerance and nondiscrimination, and this will be held up as a model to other participating states.

I would like to hear high-level delegations sharing good practices, implement specific OSCE commitments rather than repeating general condemnation of these evils. What we need now is action.

Also, we see an important role that three personal representatives and ODIHR would play at the conference.

We should first promote tolerance and nondiscrimination but also extend this with the promotion of mutual respect and understanding.

The OSCE should continue promoting dialogue and discussion on the questions of anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance and discrimination.

ODIHR and the three personal representatives, together with other OSCE institutions and other international organizations, as well nongovernmental organizations should work with states to ensure implementation of the commitments.

Now, you may be interested to know that I discussed this issue with Jewish leaders this morning. And they have said we should move from the commitment-making process to the implementation phase. The next step should be, in my opinion, an evaluation of implementation.

A possible outcome of Cordoba could be to propose something like institutionalization of good practices across the OSCE region, or criteria to evaluate implementation of the OSCE tolerance and nondiscrimination commitments.

I also hope that Cordoba, and after Cordoba, a truly holistic approach to combat all forms of discrimination and intolerance will prevail, as this is the most effective way to address this issue.

Regarding your initiative, regarding visiting political prisoners, I have, myself, tried very modestly a few weeks back to talk to my colleague in Belarus. There is a serious problem there.

I absolutely accept the idea that you have proposed.

And I really expect you to give me some information that I could use to talk to dissidents, to talk to prisoners if that is possible. In some cases, that might not be possible. But certainly, I see my function exactly in the direction that you have indicated.

When I was in Kazakhstan and when I was in Uzbekistan I have met representatives of NGOs and political parties, political parties in the Parliament—and there are not so many—and outside the Parliament, and there are quite a few. And they have very competent analyses of the political situations in these countries.

I was enthusiastic about some of the contributions that I heard in these meetings. What I recognized—and this is going back to Senator Brownback's introduction—in some of these speeches and statements some echoes of statements and speeches given elsewhere, in Ukraine, in Georgia, in Central Europe.

It is, indeed, a process that is alive, that moves, let's say, the eastern frontier, the eastern border of the West further and further to the East.

Thank you.

Sen. BROWNBACK. Thank you very much.

I've thought that word "enough," in various languages, is coming forward in the Ukraine, it's coming forward in Georgia, it's coming forward in Lebanon. Maybe the OSCE should put together a poster that just has "enough" in various languages to showcase the movement which is quite profound and very interesting.

Dr. RUPEL. Perhaps somebody would misunderstand that—that we've had enough of the OSCE. [Laughter.]

Sen. BROWNBACK. Well, I don't know. I would hope not. We'll see. Congressman Cardin?

Mr. CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Our Commission, I think, there is unanimity in our view about the Russian Federation and our urging that you maintain a very strong position in regards to their position, particularly on election monitoring.

Now, you gave a very diplomatic response to the question. And the election monitoring has been extremely helpful in bringing about change in countries.

And I just urge you to stand firm in one of the principal functions of the OSCE, despite the fact that the Russian Federation seems to be questioning this role of the OSCE.

It seems to me somewhat strange that the Russian Federation wants to be considered a major power within OSCE in every respect except paying its dues.

And it seems to me, also, that you have a real problem on process—you mentioned that when you started—with the budget.

And I would just urge you—you know, one of the principles of the OSCE is basically transparency. And I would suggest that you need more transparency in the way that decisions are made in Vienna. Countries are just allowed to stop actions too quietly. And sometimes I think you need to require that there be more action taken by a country that is failing to bring about consensus.

I want to follow up on the anti-Semitism question in the Cordoba conference that you were talking about.

I agree with you completely that a critical part of the Cordoba conference will be implementation, and the best practices and the sharing of the best practices and the offering of help and assistance to those states who need help in implementing a strategy against the anti-Semitism or other forms of religious intolerance and racial discrimination.

The experience, though, of Berlin showed that, unless a lot of work is done in advance of the conference, the chances of success are somewhat minimal. You can't wait till you get to Cordoba to have a successful conference. It has to be well-planned in advance, if it, in fact, will be a successful conference.

I just would like to get your view as to what type of preliminary work you think would be useful in order to be able to have the type of result that you think is necessary on the implementation of commitments against intolerance.

Dr. RUPEL. Thank you. Well, the participating States that committed themselves to report to ODIHR on anti-Semitic and other hate crimes committed within their territories really have a lot of work to do.

ODIHR has made repeated requests to the participating States. Actually, only 41 out of 55 participating States have provided statistics on the subject of hate crimes, anti-Semitic crimes committed within their territories.

We are considering whether the personal representatives should follow up with participating States which have not provided information to ODIHR.

At the end of March, the ODIHR will present a report on gaps in information and statistics received and make recommendations on how data collection can be improved.

Less than a third of participating States gave the names of the focal points that are crucial for the further work of ODIHR. Now, what can I do, what can we do here before Cordoba and then later, of course, as well? We shall continue to urge states to follow and implement the various decisions made within the OSCE forum on issues concerning intolerance.

Now, this issue is among the priorities of the Slovenian OSCE chairmanship and we advocate a strong role for OSCE institutions, especially ODIHR, in providing technical assistance and support and for the three personal representatives in promoting the issues at all levels of decisionmaking.

I would like to reiterate our support for election monitoring. We are not compromising on this.

Mr. CARDIN. That's a good answer. You don't have to clarify it any more. I agree with that position, so thank you.

If I could, on the questions just about the expansion and role and to the Mediterranean partners in cooperation, I have found it very helpful the forums that we've had that have been directed to the Mediterranean partners. We've been holding these meetings now for several years, and I think they have actually grown and evolved to be more significant over time, particularly when they're related to specific subjects.

And now, with the hope and opportunity for peace in that region, it seems to me that these meetings might take on additional significance.

I just really wanted to underscore the point that you have made. This is an evolving process, their participation within OSCE. And I would just urge you to be aggressive in seizing opportunities that may come about during this year in which OSCE can be helpful in regards to the problems in the Mediterranean area.

On the economic front, you heard in my statement my concern about the capacity within OSCE to deal with economic issues.

I strongly support the Maastricht document, particularly developing a long-term strategy to fight corruption. But it seems to me that the economic basket and the environmental basket were the last to really evolve within OSCE, and they don't have the same visibility as far as appointments of staff or related agencies or committees as the other two baskets have.

And I would like to get your thoughts as to how we could improve the capacity within OSCE to help member states implement

the economic and environmental commitments, particularly those that are included in the Maastricht documents.

Dr. RUPEL. I think that lately we have—I may say this—made up for lost time in this dimension, the economic dimension. And of course, I have to refer to the Maastricht ministerial council in 2003.

We have been working on the improvement of the effectiveness and efficiency of the economic forum, the most important event in the economic dimension.

Last year, we deepened cooperation with the UNECE, and I'm referring to review of commitments, development of an early warning mechanism.

We worked closely with UNDP and UNEP, those United Nations agencies. And there is a scope for working more closely with others like the World Bank and the EBRD, European bank. Major financial institutions sometimes have political mandates, but weak, weak instruments to implement them. And perhaps the OSCE can help.

We can also do more in terms of early warning in this dimension and promoting regional cooperation.

Now, I would—let us discuss the use of the OSCE as a forum for promoting something like the Stability Pact in the South Caucasus or maybe Central Asia. Perhaps you could improve synergies with various other economic initiatives aimed at developing the OSCE area, including the E.U. neighborhood policy and G-8 commitment.

Now, as you remember, one of the criticisms against the OSCE has been that we dedicate—that we give too much emphasis on the human dimension. And we should work more intensively in connection with this economic dimension, not to speak about the security dimension.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Ambassador, I want to make it clear, I don't think we spent too much time on the human dimension. I just want to strengthen the economic dimension.

I want to make that clear, because I'm proud of the roles that we played in the human dimension.

Dr. RUPEL. Well, this is what I wanted to say, absolutely.

I think that we could perhaps do more work here and by that we would counter the criticisms or we would make them irrelevant.

We are known—and we have been famous—for our human dimension involvement. Let us become famous also for our economic and ecological involvement. These are issues that are very closely connected.

Look at Kosovo. I have very shortly spoken about Kosovo. There you have a very complicated economic situation, practically no jobs for a growing population, very young.

How do we resolve the problems of Kosovo without tackling the economic problem?

Now, then, of course, the next question would be: How do we tackle the economic problem of Kosovo if we do not resolve some, let's say, standard and of course also future status questions?

So all these issues are interrelated, and we should not forget this.

And OSCE is a wonderful organization because it does contain all these dimensions, and the only thing is that we should use them all to the same intensity.

Mr. CARDIN. Thank you.

Sen. BROWNBACK. Thank you, Congressman Cardin. I appreciate that.

One final point, and then we'll let you go, Dr. Rupel. And I appreciate very much your being here.

On the Georgia border monitoring—I've worked with the Georgians for a number of years on this issue. This has been one of a great deal of frustration for Georgia, for what's taken place on the border: inability, really, to move the Russians out of the region. You had border monitoring, but then they've been unable to continue that.

How do you plan to address Georgia's legitimate security concerns? If a small mission is established in Tbilisi, how do you envision that this will be able to truly add to Georgia's stability?

I do hope this is one—and particularly where Georgia has taken such an aggressive step, bold step, on democracy, moving forward, great building of civil society, and then they've got the Russians that just won't leave the border alone.

Dr. RUPEL. Thank you, Senator, for this question, for reminding us of the importance of Georgia and its problems, the relevance of problems of Georgia for the OSCE.

This has been on our agenda for some time. Actually, from the first day of my chairmanship, I was confronted with this problem.

I guess that we can do nothing about the BMO that we used to have. Its mandate is finished. It has been concluded. What can we do?

I have spoken, by the way, with former Prime Minister Zhvania about this problem, one day before he died. I have spoken afterwards with my colleague, the foreign minister. And I have spoken with the president, Saakashvili.

We are now moving toward a solution which probably will not be an OSCE solution. OSCE will still want to train border guards. We are still planning a border guards training mission in Georgia, even if we still have some opposition, and I am not going to say where.

But the E.U. has come up with a proposal. At the moment I think there are three options on the table. They will be discussed tomorrow, if I'm not mistaken, in Brussels.

Brussels would like to send something like E.U. border monitoring operation mission. But there are some modalities that are not yet either accepted or received or decided upon.

One of these options is only to send people to Tbilisi and sit there and watch from distance. This will not have the same effect as the border monitoring operation had, the last one that we had until the 1st of January.

I shall try to see, with our European colleagues, whether we can come up with something more robust. Because from what I hear from our Georgian friends, that's exactly what they need.

We should not leave the border between Russian and Georgia, I mean Dagestan, Ingushetia, Chechnya, and Georgia, undefended, unprotected, because then, of course, all kinds of traffic might take place and this will endanger Georgia.

Georgia is very important because it is one of—well, let's put it this way—new democracies in the region. And, of course, if Georgia fails to resolve some of its essential problems, people will start losing confidence in achievement and, well, I hate to say it, OSCE.

So I try everything that is in my powers to work for a good solution there.

But, of course, as you know, Georgia doesn't only suffer because of this border, it suffers also because of South Ossetia and because of Abkhazia. And there I hope that we can introduce some mechanisms that would alleviate the situation and probably bring a solution.

I don't know whether we shall be able to do it in this year. Certainly, I should do my best and I shall do it in consultation with Georgian authorities and of course with the 54—on top of Slovenia—participating States.

Unfortunately, no solutions can be imposed. We have to talk. We have to negotiate.

Sen. BROWNBACK. I understand.

Dr. RUPEL. And so this is more or less the way that I have to take.

Thank you.

Sen. BROWNBACK. I just wanted to bring it to your attention, because I do think it's something we really need to get at.

Mr. CARDIN. Could I just put on the record—it won't require, I think, a response—but just an observation, that this is the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II. It's the 30th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, but it's the 10th anniversary of the Dayton accords, and we still have Mladic and Karadzic, indicted war criminals, that have not been turned over to The Hague.

I hope that a priority of this year of OSCE will see all the indicted war criminals at last turned over to The Hague so this chapter can be brought to a conclusion. The last point I would just like to put on the record is that we have not asked any questions about the Roma issue, and I don't want that to be as an indication of a lack of interest. Our Commission is very concerned.

We have visited Roma camps, and they're one of the most discriminated groups in Europe. And we continue to want to be kept informed the progress being made in regards to the Roma population.

Sen. BROWNBACK. Thank you for raising that, because I had that in my notes as well.

But I hope you would take a good strong look at that.

Well, Dr. Rupel, thank you very much for joining us. And for your new chairmanship, we wish you all the best and Godspeed. And we will do our part to help you in your success.

Hearing's adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:37 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

APPENDICES

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

I join the Helsinki Commission Co-Chairs in welcoming the Chair-in-Office to this hearing.

There is a broad consensus among the ranks of the Helsinki Commission on the importance of the Human Dimension in the OSCE. House or Senate, Democrat or Republican, Helsinki Commissioners believe that human rights must be a guiding principle in relations between states. We may disagree in emphasis and sometimes on specific policy responses, but I think our goals are very much the same.

I therefore would like to shift the focus a little bit from the specific issues and countries of concern, and to focus for a few minutes on the OSCE itself, including some thoughts on prospects for reforming, revitalizing and rebalancing the OSCE.

First, I chair the committee of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly dealing with economic affairs, science, technology and the environment. The committee has been focused on implementation of the Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension adopted at the Maastricht Ministerial in 2003. We have focused particularly on the development of a comprehensive, long-term OSCE strategy to combat corruption. We have also discussed the need to strengthen this dimension of the OSCE, which has traditionally lagged behind both the Security and the Human Dimension. I strongly believe that one step the participating States should take is to upgrade the status of the OSCE Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities which would improve the OSCE's ability to assist participating States as they implement their economic and environmental commitments.

Second, I share the interest in looking beyond the OSCE States themselves. It is indeed paradoxical yet encouraging, as you, Dr. Rupel, said in Vienna when speaking to the Parliamentary Assembly two weeks ago, that at a time when the existence and purpose of the OSCE is questioned by some of the countries which comprise it, countries outside the OSCE look to the organization for inspiration and assistance. I have primarily in mind here the Mediterranean partners, who many not be bound to OSCE commitments but have an interest in dealing with their security, economic, environmental and human rights issues in a similar way.

Last June, this Commission held a hearing on the applicability of the Helsinki process to the Mediterranean region, including part or all of the Middle East. Natan Sharansky, who testified at the hearing, has recently written a book called "The Case for Democracy" which is a recipe for freedom in the Middle East. The election for the Palestinian Authority, the announcement of opposition candidates in Egypt's forthcoming elections, Saudi officials discussing the inevitability of women participating in future elections, and now the events developing in Lebanon may not be steps OSCE countries would view as adequate for themselves, but they are a reflection of growing acceptance of democracy as the best form of government, not just in the OSCE region but around the world. I certainly encourage you to take advantage of the growing interest in

the OSCE in order to help bring to the Middle East some of the positive changes the Helsinki process brought to Europe.

As far as OSCE reform, I think the organization is less in need of reform than refinement. Overall, it is effective. To be more effective, the members of NATO and the EU need to understand that the specific benefits and capabilities of the OSCE in no way threaten these favored institutions but actually complement them, with comparative advantage in certain fields like police training and elections.

Rather than looking to OSCE institutions for answers to problems, all participating States should be advised to use the organization more effectively themselves in raising concern about security and cooperation in Europe. Implementation needs to be reviewed frankly, thoroughly and regularly. For instance, all OSCE participating States have promised to combat anti-Semitic crimes and hate crimes, as well as forward statistical information about these crimes to ODIHR for compilation. However, these efforts should not only be in the Human Dimension, as the OSCE could and should be used to make participating States accountable for allowing arms, weapons and technology to get into the hands of rogue regimes, terrorist organizations or combatants in local conflicts around the world. Certain countries needs to be told to talk less and do more to combat corruption and organized crime, including on issues like money laundering.

Those who deny consensus to decisions on which there is wide agreement must be made to do so openly at the table, not quietly in the corridors where the repercussions of recalcitrance are less painful. This might also help the Chair-in Office do less managing and find more time for leading. Right now, my concern is that nobody in the OSCE is given the real opportunity to develop a vision for the organization's future.

These are just a few of my thoughts, and I look forward to having this discussion with the Chair-in-Office today.

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

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I would like to congratulate Senator Brownback on his appointment as Chairman of the Helsinki Commission. It will be an honor to work alongside you in the interest of trans-Atlantic dialogue, human rights and democratic freedom. With the concerns that you have consistently demonstrated for the protection and the nurturing of democratic development around the world, the Helsinki Commission is more than fortunate to have a Chairman with your expertise, energetic devotion and leadership.

As I have mentioned to you before, you are, Mr. Chairman, a fine statesman and I wish you the very best as you begin your Chairmanship.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome my good friend, the Slovenian Foreign Minister and Chairman-in Office of the OSCE, Dr. Rupel to Washington, D.C. Although this is the Foreign Minister's first official visit to Washington as Chairman-in Office he is certainly no stranger to our nation's capital. Dr. Rupel spent a considerable amount of time in Washington at the Slovenian Embassy on New Hampshire Avenue as the former Slovenian Ambassador to the United States.

As my colleagues are aware, I have the pleasure of serving as the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE, and I am well aware of the challenges that we face today in order to protect and promote human rights and democracy among the 55 participating nations and I know personally that Chairman Brownback stands along side me in this great challenge.

Mr. Chairman, you will be glad to know that more than 200 parliamentarians from 46 OSCE participating States met from February 24-25 in the OSCE premises in Vienna for the fourth Annual OSCE PA Winter Meeting. The Winter Meeting consisted of two Joint Sessions as well as separate meetings of the three General Committees. On the first day, parliamentarians heard welcoming remarks by our distinguished witness today, Dr. Rupel, who took questions from the floor, the President of the Republic of Austria, Dr. Heinz Fischer, and myself in the capacity as President of the Assembly.

The Chairman-in-Office highlighted the importance of the election-monitoring work of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, and encouraged parliamentarians to contribute actively to the current debate on reform of the OSCE.

I am confident that the Foreign Minister and Chairman-in Office is aware of the fact that the Parliamentary Assembly was not represented among the Eminent Persons Group appointed by the Chairmanship, even though we recommended two people, each of whom is as qualified as anyone else that was appointed. I am curious to know the Chairman-in-Office's views of the Parliamentary Assembly and if they will be conveyed to the Group of Eminent Persons?

Recently there has been criticism by certain member states that the OSCE functions in a manner that favors "Western countries." I beg to differ with this assertion. The OSCE through its election

monitoring, its promotion of human rights, and conflict prevention has been on the side of democracy and human rights. If there are certain member states whose domestic or foreign policies run in contradiction to these goals, then those member states need to seriously investigate why their policies run counter to the goals of individual freedom. As long as the opposition to individual freedom, democracy and human rights is present in any of the 55 OSCE member states then security will always be a problem. As long as there is no individual security, how can there be national security, or regional security? This past Christmas when I was in Kiev, Ukraine, I gazed down Kiev's main street and noticed that the citizens of Kiev were not chanting "O-S-C-E", but they were chanting words such as "democracy" and "freedom", and they were demanding it now.

Mr. Chairman I would like to take this time to thank my good friend, the Slovenian Foreign Minister and Chairman-in Office of the OSCE, Dr. Dimitri Rupel for appearing before this Commission, I welcome him again to our nation's capital, and I look forward to his remarks.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DIMITRIJ RUPEL, CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE, ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Senator Brownback, Congressman Smith, Distinguished Members of the US Congress and the Helsinki Commission, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for the opportunity to address this hearing. The work of the Helsinki Commission has been a vital element of the CSCE process and for keeping the spotlight on the link between human rights and security. You also play a key role in raising awareness of the OSCE in the United States. Your work is vital, more vital today, perhaps, than ever.

THE OSCE: UNDER ATTACK IN AN ANNIVERSARY YEAR

The OSCE is under attack. Some critics—even heads of State—are questioning its relevance, its way of implementing decisions, its approach to election monitoring, and accusing it of double standards.

Russia in particular is outspoken—although not alone—in its criticisms. As a result the mandate of the border monitoring operation in Georgia was not extended at the end of last year, there was no consensus on a common Declaration at the Ministerial Council at Sofia in December (for the second year in a row). We still do not have a 2005 budget, and there is no agreement on scales of contribution.

Is the OSCE in crisis? Well, the situation is not ideal. But perhaps this is an opportunity to get some things out in the open that have been festering for awhile.

Not everyone will agree with the criticism of the Russian Federation and some members of the Commonwealth of Independent States, but their views should not be ignored or dismissed. I personally do not believe that the OSCE practices double standards. But we have to address the perception among some countries that it does, that countries west of Vienna are teachers with a license to lecture the “pupils” East of Vienna. That is not to say that we should lower our standards or erode our common principles, but we have to maintain a co-operative spirit.

I therefore welcome the debate on strengthening the OSCE. I have appointed a Panel of Eminent Persons to review the effectiveness of the Organization and provide strategic vision for the OSCE in the future. Their recommendations will come out at the end of June. There is also a Working Group on Reform and a Group looking at improving the functioning and effectiveness of OSCE field operations.

At the Sofia Ministerial Council, a decision was taken that clarifies and strengthens the role of the Secretary General. We are currently in the process of selecting a new Secretary General to succeed Jan Kubis, and I hope to make that appointment in the spring.

Since the United States, particularly this Commission, is so supportive of the OSCE, I urge you to ensure that America’s commitment is made clear at the highest level. I spoke with Secretary of State Rice yesterday and said how useful it was for her and the President to lay out so clearly during their recent visits to Europe

the importance of EU-US relations and the vision that the United States has for NATO. The same needs to be done for the OSCE. The future of this Organization and what it stands for should not be taken for granted.

I am concerned that in this year when we should be celebrating thirty years since the signing of the Helsinki Final Act and fifteen years since the Charter of Paris we are hearing echoes of Cold War rhetoric. At a time when we should be celebrating the OSCE's good work in building security through co-operation, it appears that the common ground on which we stand may be shrinking. We must avoid the re-opening of divisions in Europe and avoid any backsliding of progress that has been made in recent years. The OSCE is absolutely instrumental in that process.

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Annual Session that will take place here in Washington in July will be a good opportunity to raise the OSCE's profile and to re-affirm its importance. I urge this Commission to lend its backing to that event. If you can encourage senior members of the executive branch to participate, so much the better.

I know that I am preaching to the converted here when I underline the importance of the OSCE as a vital means of promoting security through co-operation in the region from Vancouver to Vladivostock.

Its comprehensive approach to security is more valid than ever, linking human rights, socio-economic and environmental issues, and the political military dimension. Security is so much more than "hard" security, and the OSCE demonstrates why and how situations need to be looked at holistically.

The OSCE is an effective multi-lateral forum—essential for bringing States together and seeking common solutions to common problems. This is vital in our inter-dependent world where threats to security defy national boundaries and insecurity in one part of the world can have an effect on us all.

CONFLICT PREVENTION, PEACE BUILDING AND POST-CONFLICT REHABILITATION

The OSCE is geared to preventing conflict, and to post-conflict rehabilitation.

In Moldova the situation concerning Transdniestria remains frozen, but I am hopeful that the recent developments in Ukraine and the conclusion of elections in Moldova—which the OSCE has closely monitored—will usher in a new opportunity to kick-start the settlement process. I intend to travel to Moldova next week.

In Georgia, we remain the lead Organization for seeking a settlement to the conflict in South Ossetia and could do more with the UN in Abkhazia concerning the protection and promotion of human rights. We remain engaged with the Georgian authorities to assist them in their process of democratization. It is disappointing that our successful border monitoring operation was not extended, but we will seek to answer Georgia's request for training border guards.

Concerning Nagorno-Karabakh, the Minsk process is back on track through high-level discussions between the Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan. Recently a fact-finding mission under

OSCE auspices visited the occupied territories of Azerbaijan to clarify the situation on the ground.

Of course, much depends on the continued democratization in both countries—a process that the OSCE actively supports. For that reason we were alarmed by the recent murder of Azeri journalist Elmar Huseynov. This is the latest example of censorship by killing which, like the case of Georgiy Gongadze in Ukraine in 2000, is a despicable practice and one which is a serious threat to freedom of the media.

Belarus has a clear democracy deficit. The leadership seems to be pushing itself into further isolation and the OSCE is one of its few remaining links with the international community. The position of the United States is clear through the Belarus Democracy Act and Secretary of State's description of Belarus as "an outpost of tyranny". Given the fact that the OSCE is a consensus-based inter-governmental organization I must be more cautious. But I can say that we have expressed our concerns about the clamp down on civil society, the rule of law, and human rights. And we will continue to work with the Belarusian authorities to ensure respect for OSCE commitments. I plan to visit Minsk in the next few months.

This is an important year for Kosovo where the OSCE is a major player. I recently visited Pristina and Belgrade and emphasized the OSCE's commitment to a peaceful and sustainable settlement in a way that ensures representative government and the protection and promotion of human rights, particularly the rights of persons belonging to national minorities. We also must consider the socio-economic angle. Unemployment, particularly among young people, is running at more than 50%. This is not sustainable and is a dangerous ingredient in the cocktail of political insecurity and ethnic mistrust. There is still plenty of work to do and some tough decisions to make—for the international community, countries of the region and first and foremost, all people living in Kosovo. The international community, including the OSCE, needs to be engaged and to move forward the comprehensive review of standards in order to resolve one of Europe's most crucial security issues.

In South Eastern Europe as a whole things are definitely going in the right direction. The pull of the EU and the support of NATO, the United States and the Stability Pact, among others, have been important for stabilizing the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. But the shoots of democracy are still frail, and they need steady and long-term support. For its part the OSCE—particularly through its Missions—is continuing its important work in a range of areas—supporting capacity building and inter-state co-operation on war crimes proceedings; protecting minority rights and strengthening inter-ethnic integration; refugee return; police training; assisting with legal reform; border management; as well as elections.

The OSCE is one of the few international organizations that is present and active across Central Asia. I recently visited Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan and will visit the rest of the region in mid-April. I believe that this region deserves special attention, which is why I have appointed former Slovenian Prime Minister Alojz Peterle, to be my Personal Representative to Central Asia to augment the work of OSCE Centres and Institutions. Our work in

Central Asia is very much designed to support the regimes in their processes of democratization. We are also paying special attention to migration, human rights education, and border management. Elections are also a high priority. For example the OSCE has recently monitored elections in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Some States in the region may not be reforming as quickly as many of us would like. But I believe that it is important to remain constructively engaged, and to offer a hand of support rather than only pointing fingers. While it is important to promote regional co-operation—which is badly lacking—we must also be careful to look at the individual situations in each country.

The situation in Central Asia can not be considered without looking at the impact of developments in neighbouring Afghanistan. Just as instability in Afghanistan had a dangerous effect on security in Central Asia, stability and democracy in Afghanistan can reduce the risk of extremism, trafficking and trans-border instability spilling over into the region.

The deployment of an Election Support Team to Afghanistan during the Presidential elections last October was an important step for the OSCE. I believe that we should build on it and respond positively to Foreign Minister Abdullah's invitation to play a similar role in the Parliamentary elections, as well as looking at other ways of increasing co-operation with this important Partner for Co-operation. I believe that fostering closer relations with Mongolia—our newest Partner—can also add to the richness of the OSCE's work in Eurasia.

THE HUMAN DIMENSION

The vital importance of the OSCE's human dimension is not something that I need to convince this Commission of. Election monitoring in Ukraine has again demonstrated the OSCE's leading work in this field. We can all be proud of the excellent work of the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in mobilizing more than 1,000 observers over the Christmas period for the re-run of the second round of presidential elections. That being said, there may be ways that we could further enhance our election monitoring activities. I am open to the idea of creating a working group on this subject. But I stress that this should build on our existing achievements, not water them down.

Following on from last year's successful and high-profile OSCE conferences on anti-Semitism and racism, xenophobia and discrimination, three Special Representatives have been appointed to enhance the OSCE's work in combating intolerance and discrimination. This is important work.

COPING WITH NEW THREATS AND CHALLENGES

Senator Brownback, in your letter of invitation you asked me to identify emerging internal and external threats to the OSCE region. As you may be aware, at the Maastricht Ministerial Council in December 2003 Ministers agreed on an OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century. In that respect, I believe that we were two years ahead of the UN Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change and are already

well-equipped and well-positioned to address the threats that were identified.

These threats include:

- inter- and intra-State conflicts;
- terrorism;
- organized crime (including trafficking);
- discrimination and intolerance;
- migration and immigration;
- deepening economic and social disparities and environmental degradation;
- and threats of a politico-military nature.

Allow me to elaborate on a few of these.

The OSCE is doing important work in counter terrorism, promoting the implementation of existing commitments, carrying out concrete projects, and ensuring that counter terrorism efforts respect human rights. This year the OSCE is joining international efforts to strengthen container security.

Borders are, to some extent, losing their significance. At the same time, borders still matter and their security needs to be effectively managed. That is why the OSCE is paying increased attention to border management and security.

In the political military dimension, a proposal has been made for the OSCE to host a seminar on military doctrine. I believe that this is timely, and the OSCE is the ideal place to discuss this topic. Disarmament, arms control and confidence-building measures have long been central elements of the OSCE's work, and the CFE Treaty and Open Skies are within the framework of the OSCE. Bearing in mind the changes in the world order, technology, and warfare, it would be useful to compare notes on contemporary military doctrines.

This year, as a matter of priority, the OSCE's Forum for Security Co-operation will pay significant attention to the implementation of decisions aimed at strengthening the control of participating States over export and trafficking of small arms and light weapons, including MANPADS. The OSCE will also engage in concrete projects designed to assist participating States in improving the management, security and destruction of surpluses of small arms and conventional ammunition stockpiles. As always, the Annual Security Review Conference will be an excellent opportunity to exchange views on these and other political-military issues.

Through the implementation of the OSCE Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension we are enhancing development, security and stability by, for example, looking at ways to strengthen good governance, ensuring sustainable development, protecting the environment, improving early warning and early action, and reviewing the implementation of commitments.

The OSCE is a leader in anti-trafficking, and this year we are paying special attention to the high risk category of child victims of trafficking.

Policing is an ideal issue for the OSCE. It combines security and human rights. Good policing has a vital role to play in the prevention of conflict, the preservation of social stability during political crises and the post-conflict rehabilitation of societies. Without effective law enforcement, respect for the rule of law and the operation

of institutions responsible for upholding it, there can be little likelihood of social, political or economic development in any State.

The OSCE runs police development units in Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Serbia-Montenegro including Kosovo. A police assistance programme has been launched in Kyrgyzstan and others are in preparation in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

No other international organization currently possesses the potential to strengthen long-term law enforcement capacity- and institution-building in the OSCE region in the States most susceptible to crime, corruption and human rights violations. The United States has seconded many excellent police officers to assist us in our work and I am grateful for your support.

EXTERNAL THREATS

Unlike 30 years ago when the CSCE was launched, or even 15 years ago when the Charter of Paris was signed, some of the most dangerous threats to security for OSCE States come from outside the OSCE area. The OSCE deals with the symptoms of these threats—trafficking, hate crimes, terrorism. But its role in dealing with the causes is limited.

Nevertheless, we are not powerless. Firstly the OSCE can work to ensure that its commitments are universally applied within the OSCE area. I think, for example, it is healthy when the United States is challenged in the Permanent Council on aspects of the human dimension or when the OSCE sends election monitors to the United States as we did in 2004. This sends an important signal that mature democracies have nothing to hide and are open to learn.

Secondly, we can try to share our values and expertise with others outside the OSCE area. As I mentioned, last autumn we were active in Afghanistan and have been invited to support the forthcoming parliamentary elections. In January we sent an assessment mission to see what help we could offer the Palestinian Authority for elections. Regional and sub-regional organizations from around the world ask us for advice.

In short, we fulfill our role as a regional arrangement of the United Nations and try to share with others the merits of building security through co-operation.

OSCE VIGILANT IN THE CAUSE OF PEACE

Members of Congress and the Commission,

This is an exciting year for the OSCE, both because we are marking significant anniversaries and because of the profound changes that the Organization is going through. Europe is in transition. The security architecture is being reconstructed. NATO, the EU, the Council of Europe and the UN are in transition.

Strengthening the OSCE is not an end in itself, it is a necessity based on contemporary realities. We should not become bogged down in a self-obsessed debate on reform. We need to see how the OSCE can most effectively deal with the real challenges of the day that affect the lives of real people.

And that is where you can help. Bring the OSCE to the attention of your constituents and your peers. Use the Parliamentary Assembly and all other channels to make the OSCE stronger.

On August 1, 1975, US President Gerald Ford told other heads of state gathered in Helsinki and I quote—"The nations assembled here have kept the general peace in Europe for 30 years. Yet there have been too many narrow escapes from major conflict. There remains, to this day, the urgent issue of how to construct a just and lasting peace for all peoples".

The world has changed dramatically in the past three decades, but the need to build a lasting peace for all peoples remains the same. As the anti-slavery campaigner Wendell Philips said, the price of peace is eternal vigilance. The OSCE stands on guard for you.

Thank you for your attention.



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