

Statement of the Honorable Christopher H. Smith  
Ranking Member, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe  
Hearing on  
“Twenty-first Century Security in the OSCE Region”  
November 5, 2007

Mr. Chairman, I welcome this hearing focused on the current challenges in the military security dimension of the OSCE. While the Helsinki process is best known for its contributions in human rights and democratization, the little known reality is that agreements reached within the framework of the OSCE have proven critical to arms control more generally. At the heart of these advances has been the question of transparency of military activity.

While the Helsinki Final Act contained some modest measures, such as the encouragement that participating States -- then divided into NATO, the Warsaw Pact, and the Neutral and Non-Aligned -- the work of the Conference on Security and Disarmament in Europe, the CDE Conference, deserves particular attention. For it was at that conference in Stockholm that the Soviet Union agreed for the first time to intrusive on-site inspection provisions without the right to refuse such an inspection on its territory. Bear in mind that this was still during the Cold War. Indeed, those provisions proved critical, paving the way for the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) signed by Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev twenty years ago this year.

These developments, in turn, led to the further elaboration of transparency measures, known as confidence and security-building measures (CSBMs) in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s. Another concrete result was the CFE Treaty, on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, concluded in 1990 and signed at the Paris Summit of Helsinki signatory states. With the rapid changes that occurred throughout the 1990s, in part, as a result of the OSCE, an adapted version of the CFE Treaty was signed in 1999 in Istanbul on the margins of the OSCE summit.

Progress on ratification of that version of the treaty has been complicated by the slow progress of the Russian Federation in meeting its commitments from Istanbul to withdraw its troops and materials from bases in Georgia and Moldova. Nearly eight years after agreement in Istanbul, withdrawal of Russian troops from Georgia is finally underway and a contingent of an estimated 1,000 troops remains in Moldova. Moscow's neuralgic reaction to the mere mention of its "Istanbul commitments" have undercut more than one OSCE ministerial meeting and we should expect the same at the upcoming Madrid Ministerial scheduled for late next month.

Reeling from a series of perceived security setbacks, including eastern expansion of NATO, the Kremlin announced earlier this year the suspension of the CFE Treaty. It has yet to be seen how serious Moscow is about scrapping the CFE. Meanwhile, Russia continues to exacerbate tensions with Georgia, including troublemaking in secessionist regions of that country. Putin also coddles dictators like Lukashenka in Belarus and Karimov in Uzbekistan, the latter responsible for the bloody massacre at Andijon.

Together with Russian efforts to eviscerate OSCE election monitoring activities and dictate which, if any, NGOs can participate in Human Dimensions meetings, Moscow is showing

its visceral contempt for the very principles that are at the heart of the Helsinki process: democracy, human rights and transparency.

It is incumbent upon the United States and others to not blink in the face of Putin's attempts at bullying. Vacillation or compromise will only breed more problems and erode the OSCE as a meaningful organization. Provocative rhetoric and actions by Putin and his cronies should be viewed as testaments to the efficacy of those very aspects of the OSCE they are seeking to scuttle. Our task is to remind them of their obligations to live up to commitments they previously accepted, regardless of whether or not they would agree to them today. Allowing an *ala carte* approach to OSCE would consign it to irrelevance.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I look forward to hearing the witnesses' views regarding the progress achieved in the OSCE's border security and counterterrorism endeavors. The critical role of good border management in combating the scourge of human trafficking, the illicit spread of drugs and weapons, and constraining terrorist activity underscores the value of these efforts to security in the OSCE region in general.