

**Statement of Senator Benjamin L. Cardin
Co-Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe**

**Hearing on
A Parliamentary Perspective on Security and Cooperation in Today's Europe
October 18, 2007**

I want to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for convening this hearing, and I am delighted to welcome the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President and our colleague from Sweden, Goran Lenmarker, to Washington and to Capitol Hill today.

I have been an active member of the U.S. Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary for a number of years, and am particularly glad that I can continue to be active from the Senate as I had from the House. It has always been a valuable and rewarding experience, proposing new ideas and debating issues internationally just as we do here in the Congress.

The often neglected but, in my view, very important issues covered by the second committee have always been a priority for me. In recent years, and still today, official corruption has been major problem in many OSCE participating States. In the OSCE PA, we have pushed for greater anti-corruption efforts, taking the form of improving governmental transparency and accountability. I hope this will continue.

I have also urged, including at OSCE PA meetings, that all countries cooperate fully with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, located in The Hague. That has meant Serbia first and foremost, given that country's poor record of cooperation. As much as we want to see this removed as an issue and for Serbia to move ahead with European integration, Belgrade must take action to improve its cooperation.

Members of the U.S. Delegation have also heard in recent meetings the concerns of our colleagues regarding Guantanamo Bay, and the U.S. human rights record. I believe we are no less concerned about this than our OSCE PA colleagues are, as our Helsinki Commission hearing in June and other activities demonstrate. We also know that this seriously hinders our own ability to press for positive changes in other countries. The answer, of course, is not to remain silent about the records of other countries, but to be sure we clean up our own act. I want to thank you, President Lenmarker, for encouraging the work of Belgian Senator Ann-Marie Lizin as your Special Representative on this issue.

I look forward to the discussion today and, as an OSCE PA Vice President, to continue to productive dialogue we have had with our parliamentary colleagues from other OSCE States over the years.