

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 need 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.