



## HELSINKI COMMISSION HEARING

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UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON  
SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

# Testimony :: Ambassador Max M. Kampelman

U.S. Ambassador - Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ambassador Palmer and I, on behalf of Freedom House, appreciate your invitation that we share with you and the members of your Commission a specific proposal designed to advance the Helsinki process as a means of strengthening our national objectives to extend democracy and human dignity where it does not now prevail. Our specific suggestion is to extend the Helsinki process to the Mediterranean, where it already has an institutional relationship.

My own exposure to the Helsinki Final Act, which created the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), began in 1980 when I was asked by President Carter to co-chair our American delegation to its Madrid follow-up meeting. President Reagan asked me to continue to chair our delegation. The three year session contributed significantly to the spread of democracy throughout Europe. Your commission, at that time, Mr. Chairman, was led by Dante Fascell and Millicent Fenwick, whose support was indispensable. We could not have functioned without the professional assistance of your staff. Some years later, in 1990 and 1991, Secretary of State Baker asked me to return to the process for one month during each of those years in order to deal with two CSCE Conferences on the Human Dimension in Moscow and Copenhagen, and a CSCE Conference on National Minorities in Geneva. Once again, your staff was of immense assistance to me. Subsequently, Secretary of State Christopher asked me to represent the United States in an OSCE delegation to Serbia. I consistently found my relationship with this Commission and your staff to be an effective and successful partnership, and I now come to you in that spirit.

The opening paragraph of the Helsinki Final Act, signed in 1975, includes the following:

“During the meetings of the second stage of the Conference, contributions were received, and statements heard, from the following non-participating Mediterranean States on various agenda items: the Democratic and Popular Republic of Algeria, the Arab Republic of Egypt, Israel, the Kingdom of Morocco, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia.”

The body of the Agreement includes a section entitled “Questions Relating to Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean,” a 13-paragraph statement clearly acknowledging “the geographical, historical, cultural, economic, and political” relationship between Europe and the Mediterranean.

When I, as a newcomer to the process, asked about these provisions, I learned that some of the European states suggested that the six named Mediterranean countries be invited to sign the Agreement and become part of the process, but the prevailing view was that the East-West European relationships were of sufficient complexity and importance that they should not be diluted by the addition of these six states. They were named but not given the right to vote.

Today, as a result of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Helsinki Final Act has been formally expanded into Central Asia, and the mechanism of the process is now at work to strengthen the Helsinki democratic principles in that area of the world.

The strength of the Helsinki process, whatever the complexity of its origin, was that its enunciated principles were democratic, excellent statements as to how states “ought” to behave if we were to achieve international security and cooperation. In the 29 years since its creation, the details of that “ought” have been enlarged and enriched. We in the United States had learned how important it was to agree on our “ought” – the Declaration of Independence – and strive to move our “is” to that “ought”. We removed property qualifications for voting, ended slavery, and opened the franchise to women. The Helsinki Final Act, to me, provided an excellent international “ought” toward which to reach.

Mr. Chairman, this Commission long ago appreciated the vital importance of the Mediterranean to Europe as well as to our country’s welfare. It is true that the OSCE is now hard at work, with its limited resources, undercutting the strong authoritarian tradition in much of Central Asia. Under the leadership of this Commission, the OSCE is also working to combat the renewed poisonous message of anti-Semitism which has been tragically renewed in Europe, partially as a result of the movement of a large number of North Africans, who have not been educated in the strength and desirability of our “ought,” to Europe. This inter-relationship demands recognition. It is long past due for us to formally extend the OSCE family and the virtues of our “ought” to the Mediterranean. That is the essence of the Freedom House proposal which we have for two years been urging the Executive Branch to accept, and which we bring to your Committee today for support. We urge that the six “non-participating” Mediterranean states be invited to full membership as a first step in a steady expansion to a more democratic world.

We are not alone in this urging. The Prime Minister of Denmark spoke at the Woodrow Wilson Center here in Washington some months ago and called for the expansion of the Helsinki process into the Mediterranean area. More recently, at Davos, he specifically proposed that the OSCE become the OSCEM.

Our Presidents, Democrat and Republican, have appreciated the need for our government to identify our foreign policy with the spread of democracy and human dignity to those peoples now living in authoritarian societies. We know that our security is directly related to that development. President George W. Bush has identified this goal as central to his presidency. We at Freedom House, therefore, believed that the Administration would enthusiastically embrace our suggestion that the six non-participating Mediterranean states be invited to become formal participating states in the Helsinki process.

We have discussed this proposal with responsible officials in the White House and in the State Department, where we have found encouragement and support. But the skeptics and the short-sighted seem to have temporarily prevailed. Instead of a specific non-aggressive constructive program, it appears as if the Administration position is, as expressed in the Sea Island G8 summit last week, calling for a dialogue of “willing partnership,” in effect proposing that the Arab and Mediterranean states accept our standards as they form an organization of their own. It does not surprise us to find strong opposition to that proposal. President Chirac reportedly “trashed” the proposal at a lunch with Arab leaders calling it “messianic” and “humiliating.” We had to make changes in it, retreat and accept the statement that “the mother of all conflicts is the Israel-Palestinian conflict,” a convenient justification used by Middle East authoritarians. One experienced international scholar wrote: “... The Administration seems to have ended up with a much more complicated approach than your idea of inviting the six Mediterranean states to have full membership. It is an approach that has ruffled the feathers of many Europeans and Arabs and does not seem to promise to lead to the creation of anything very path-breaking at the summit.”

In that connection, let me report on a conversation I had with one of the North African ambassadors representing his country in Washington. In effect, he said to me: “Our neighbors decided to form a country club. We were of some assistance in preparing the ground work, but we were not invited into membership. This exclusive club has a fine golf course, swimming pool, and tennis courts. Would we welcome an opportunity to be part of that club, with a requirement that we live by its rules? Yes. But instead, we are now asked to form a club of our own; we are not good enough to join the exclusive club. Yet we are asked to make sure that our club conforms to the rules of the exclusive club – that is insulting.” He added that his government would be pleased to join the OSCE, primarily because of its economic advantages arising out of Basket II.

Mr. Chairman, our intent at the G8 summit was noble. Our execution was poor. Our substance was inadequate. We hope that it will be a small step forward. Our Freedom House proposal is still relevant and even more essential.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that part of our problem is the fact that for many years now, the Helsinki process has been a step-child within the State Department. For example, when I refer to the Copenhagen meeting, I am too often met with blank looks. Yet, a few weeks ago, the U.S. Institute of Peace held a conference of outstanding international law professors. There was general agreement that the Copenhagen document was the most important international human rights document since the Magna Carta. I had the privilege of helping to create that Charter in the month we spent in Copenhagen. I am disappointed to be met with blank expressions when talking about it with some of our government officials.

Freedom House is eager to work with your Commission in an effort to elevate the Helsinki process to the relevance required to advance our national interests.