

FINLAND'S LEADERSHIP IN THE OSCE

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FINLAND'S LEADERSHIP IN THE OSCE

February 13, 2008

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE
WASHINGTON, DC

The hearing was held at 11 a.m. in room B-318, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC, Hon. Alcee L. Hastings, Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, presiding.

Commissioner present: Hon. Alcee L. Hastings, Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Witness present: Ilkka Kanerva, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland, OSCE Chairman-in-Office.

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS, CHAIRMAN, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Mr. HASTINGS. I'd like to get started. I understand that Co-Chairman Cardin is at a hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, where Secretary Rice is testifying on the budget. Senator Cardin's statement will be included in the record without objection.

As Chairman of the Helsinki Commission, I am pleased to gavel this hearing to order and to welcome my very good friend, Minister Ilkka Kanerva, to Capitol Hill and today's session on Finland's leadership of the 56-nation Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

I'm especially delighted, Mr. Minister, that you're appearing before us so early in your chairmanship. This provides us with a timely opportunity to learn your priorities for 2008 as the political leader of the OSCE—a complex task, given the diversity of the participating States and the diverging views among some and the emerging issues touching fundamental aspects of our organization and its mission.

I note that the overarching themes of continuity, coherence, and cooperation chosen to guide your chairmanship seem most approximate to the current times, which require skill, diplomacy, yet an unwavering commitment to the core principles enshrined in the Final Act and agreed to, at least on paper, by all participating States, irrespective of when they joined the Helsinki Process.

Given the mandate of this Commission, we fully support and welcome Finland's call for greater effort by participating States to implement our common political commitments. Implementation is key, as the late President Gerald Ford underscored in his remarks in Finlandia Hall when he signed the Helsinki Accords on behalf

of the United States. I am also mindful that all participating States, including this country, are obligated to translate words on paper into actions. And I welcome the scrutiny of others when our own policies and practices come up short.

Many of the challenges facing our countries, individually and collectively, are multi-dimensional in nature, encompassing the security, economic and human dimensions. From questions of energy security and long-standing conflicts to human trafficking and the plight of ethnic, religious and other minorities, each must be addressed across the spectrum of these dimensions. Finding solutions will require emphasis on cooperation—perhaps the part of the OSCE that needs more emphasis than ever before.

As President Emeritus of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, I especially appreciate your recognition of the unique role parliamentarians can and should play in the Helsinki Process. It is my hope that the parliamentary dimension will be strengthened under your leadership. On behalf of the entire OSCE PA leadership, let me say how much we are looking forward to your presence in Vienna next week at our Winter Meeting. I had that underscored by a call an hour ago from the President wanting to be assured that I, at least, extend an added invitation for you to attend, understanding the dynamics of your scheduling conflicts.

Mr. Minister, I would be remiss were I not to express my appreciation for your confidence in appointing me to lead the OSCE Election Observation Mission to Georgia for their January 5 extraordinary presidential elections. I thank you for that. It was a splendid opportunity for me and for those who were observers.

Finally, I note that the bonds between our two nations are strong, as we prepare to celebrate 90 years of diplomatic relations next year. I appreciate your willingness to assume leadership of the OSCE, an often thankless task, and stand ready to help in any way I can to make this a successful year.

Mr. Minister, the floor is yours. I thank you. As you can hear, the buzzer indicates a vote. OK. But I'm going to miss this vote, because I'm going to make this record for the Minister. He came all the way from Finland. They're going to vote some more here. So I'll get another opportunity. Please proceed, sir.

**H.E. ILKKA KANERVA, MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF
FINLAND, OSCE CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE**

Min. KANERVA. Thank you, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Congressman Hastings, my friend.

Dear friends, first of all, I thank you for this opportunity to speak before the U.S. Helsinki Commission as a Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE. And in the first place, I would like to use the occasion to express my deepest sympathy for the passing away of the Congressman Tom Lantos, Chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, and one of the most distinguished Members of the U.S. Congress in recent times.

Mr. HASTINGS. Thank you so very much for that expression.

Min. KANERVA. It is a great pleasure to travel from Helsinki to Washington and to be received here by the Helsinki Commission. The symbolic name of your Commission reminds us of a breakthrough of the East-West relationship. It also reminds us of the

role that our country had in making the Helsinki Process become a reality.

As a long-standing member of the Parliament in Finland myself, I fully understand the importance of the parliamentary dimension of the OSCE. The role of elected legislators is to embody the aspirations of our peoples and to voice their concerns in all OSCE countries. Therefore, I very warmly welcome the invitation to this hearing.

In this spirit, I wish to reflect with you today on some of the key issues facing the Finnish chairmanship and the OSCE in general. Issues related to election observation have dominated the beginning of the Finnish chairmanship. After the ODIHR did not observe the Russian Duma elections last December, much work was done with the aim of securing credibility OSCE election observation in the forthcoming Russian Presidential elections [scheduled for March 2].

I am satisfied that we could help Russian and ODIHR to get engaged in an active dialogue to resolve their differences under parameters of the observation. The deal was very close. But unfortunately, we will not have an ODIHR election observation mission for the Russian Presidential elections.

Let me be clear about my view on election observations. The OSCE commitments oblige the participating States to involve and host an OSCE election observation mission. These missions should cover all the key phases of the election process, encompassing candidate and voter registration, electoral campaign, media coverage, complaints, and appeals. The ODIHR must continue to be in a position to determine the length and size of observation missions on professional grounds in order to produce meaningful assessments and recommendations benefiting the observed country.

Last Week, I visited both Belgrade and Priština. Kosovo is very much on my mind in these days. As you know, the OSCE has played an important role in Kosovo in establishing and consolidating local institutions, in promoting democratization, the rule of law, as well as human and minority rights. Because the OSCE has remained status neutral, it has retained the unique ability to work with all ethnic communities in promoting stability and democracy development—their democratic development.

It is my firm belief that the OSCE work in Kosovo is beneficial for all Kosovars. The Finnish chairmanship has put the so-called frozen or protracted conflicts in Moldova, Georgia, and Nagorno-Karabakh at the top of our agenda. I will personally visit all of these regions. I have already nominated a special envoy to survey the progress in the process.

One of the first things I have already done was to visit Ukraine and Moldova, to examine possibilities to kick start the stalled negotiation on Transdnistria conflict. The Government of Moldova and the leadership for Transdnistria have indicated their willingness to reengage and I have tasked my special envoy to see what can be done to take the process forward. We have acknowledged the difficulties in front of us. But we can't give up. There is a momentum now to resolve all the conflicts in this way.

In 2 weeks, I plan to visit South Caucasus, where we lately have witnessed worrying tensions. The Finnish chairmanship will use all

possibilities to build trust between the parties and promote conflict resolution in South Ossetia, Georgia and Nagorno-Karabakh. I will work closely with the three co-chairs of the Minsk Group, the United States, France, and Russia.

We are also discussing whether the OSCE might eventually become active on Afghan territory. The OSCE Secretary General is currently collecting ideas from participating States and relevant international organizations.

We have shown a great interest in developing the OSCE Human Dimension. I would like to briefly lay out some of our plans. And I'm looking forward to hearing your thoughts in this respect.

The starting point of the Finnish chairmanship is that the OSCE is a values-based organization, that actively promotes our common values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. We stress the full implementation of the human rights commitments by the participating States. Our main operational priorities in the Human Dimension are combating trafficking in human beings, promoting tolerance and nondiscrimination, as well as gender mainstreaming in all OSCE activities.

I want to mention that this year, we will be celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This anniversary will also underline the role of the brave people who defined human rights often in difficult situations. The Finnish chairmanship will seek to increase support for our very important work within the OSCE.

The Helsinki Commission embodies the long-standing engagement of the United States with the OSCE and the values that underpin it. The OSCE can only work with the full engagement of its participating States. The United States has always played a key role and must continue to do so, if we are to achieve the ambitious goals we have set for our organization.

Every international organization should review its work in order to remain relevant to its membership. The OSCE is no exception. And in recent years, we have had a lively discussion on the reform of the OSCE. In my view, we should focus on improving the effectiveness and capacity of the OSCE to better serve the participating States and their citizens. Whatever it takes, we have to do it.

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the U.S. Helsinki Commission for your much-appreciated support for the OSCE over the years. I would like to pay tribute to you, Congressman Hastings, for your extraordinary leadership of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. I am pleased to have established an excellent relationship with the present President of the Parliamentary Assembly, Mr. Göran Lennmarker of Sweden.

I recognize the central role that the Commission has had in defining U.S. policy toward the OSCE. Perhaps the most rewarding recognition, however, comes from Henry Kissinger, who in a session held with the Helsinki Commission in 2005 commented that he did not expect that the provisions of the Helsinki Final Act would reach the scope and the impact that they now have. I fully endorse his words. The long-standing commitment of the Helsinki Commission has paid off.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, my friend, and the distinguished members of the Commission for your dedication and your support

for the Finnish OSCE chairmanship in 2008. Thank you very, very much indeed.

Mr. HASTINGS. Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. I wish to just share a couple of comments and then a few questions if you don't mind. One comment: I'm fond of saying it's difficult to apologize for working. I assure you that my fellow Commissioners are scattered throughout the Capitol. We have sort of a truncated schedule. And by virtue of the fact that we are here, all of us, on Wednesday on both sides of the aisle, it seems that just about every Wednesday is the busiest day of the week.

I saw two colleagues en route here: Mike McIntyre and Hilda Solis. And both of them are chairing other committees as we speak.

Min. KANERVA. I could stay here for 1 more week.

Mr. HASTINGS. You mentioned earlier on the election observation. And I wish to share with you that 2 weeks ago, I was with Secretary Rice in Columbia. And en route back, I spent time with her emphasizing, among other things, my hope that she would, during your visit here, extend the invitation to the OSCE to observe the upcoming American elections, that I would imagine some in the participating States have a keen interest in. And it would be a great opportunity to see many of the undertakings associated with our elections.

It's so interesting, Mr. Minister, a lot of times when I have had the good fortune to do election observation, I've heard complaints about polling places and their opening and closing. And all you had to do was be here yesterday to witness the weather, and then compare that weather with the weather we experienced in the Republic of Georgia in early January and wonder why some polling places might open later than others. I just offer that as an observation.

The other thing that I'm particularly pleased in is your highlighting your challenges and what you would hope to continue and emphasize, you mentioned tolerance. And, of course, you know a lot of effort is put forward on related concerns by those of us here on the Helsinki Commission and those of us that participate at the parliamentary dimension with the OSCE.

That said, the Commission recently concluded a series of hearings assessing OSCE work to combat anti-Semitism. And among those participating was your good friend and mine, Professor Gert Weisskirchen, who has the portfolio to work to combat anti-Semitism. It became clear from Gert that he and his colleagues need some kind of support mechanism to assist in their work.

I know that you have reappointed the three personal representatives and I commend you for that, Mr. Minister. But are you prepared to work to put in place the helpful mechanism, perhaps with other Troika members, to ensure continuity for the three personal representatives into the future? As you would know, Senator Cardin and myself, as well as Representative Chris Smith, were among those in the parliamentary dimension and the Congress, who pushed for us to emphasize this critical area.

Next week, Senator Cardin and I will be visiting the Czech Republic and will also be going to Bratislava, Slovakia. Your good friend and mine, Ján Kubiš, the Slovak Foreign Minister, was here yesterday. Senator Cardin and I met with him and among the issues that we indicated that we would be interested in are sub-

jects having to do with minorities—in the case of Slovakia, specifically Roma and Sinti. In the Czech Republic, we are going to pursue those questions that linger with reference to anti-Semitism.

So if you would just give me a general overview, more specifically dealing with the mechanism and trying to provide the assistance that Gert needs in order to be able to do the job.

Min. KANERVA. May I start by saying a few words about election monitoring missions. In my view, it is one of the most essential activities we have in the human dimension. And I want to come back to the conclusion that the basic idea is to find some fresh recommendations for the nations who are trying to implement, the most possible way, the transparent and democratic election system in their own countries.

The basic idea is not to blame anybody, and to find [inaudible] leaders or to say that you have the wrong political culture. No. The basic idea is to try to find recommendations to give a better performance in the elections for everybody.

Mr. HASTINGS. Yes, sir.

Min. KANERVA. And I think that we have to come back to discuss the basic ideas of the election monitoring. But at the same time, I want to say that we have been quite successful in the recent elections, including your activities in Georgia a couple weeks ago. You made very good work there. And we highly appreciate that.

Mr. HASTINGS. Thank you, sir.

Min. KANERVA. And I want to mention that it is also important that the ODIHR and the PA can very closely cooperate, even if they have different sectors in their monitoring, ODIHR is taking care of the long-term observation activities; PA the short-term activities. And they are closely combining their activities.

And in this time, what concerns the Russian Presidential elections, it worked. ODIHR couldn't take the mission, and neither the PA. It's in the names of the credibility of the election monitoring. It is extremely important that we have a connection between ODIHR and the PA. And we have to talk about that also in the future.

I have some ideas too. And I also hope that, when we have—in the nearest future, we'll have some missions to put those election monitoring [inaudible] missions. But they will also have close cooperation.

What concerns—you mentioned Professor Weisskirchen from Germany. I was happy to welcome him to Helsinki some weeks ago. He came, and we had very constructive discussions. And I also met him in Vienna when Finland started our activities as Chairman-in-Office. I agree that he and as well to other extent perhaps [inaudible] tolerance issues. Ambassador Orhun and Mrs. Crickley, they are giving their much, much-needed contribution with very, very little organizational support. The best way to improve the situation would be to task ODIHR to provide the support to their work, I think.

The Finnish chairmanship will convene the next meeting between the three representatives and ODIHR in a couple of weeks. And we will take care of that business. Of course, I very much agree with you that we have to give full support for their activities.

And then you had—what was next?

Mr. HASTINGS. Well, I think that covered those two areas. But I'll move to a couple of other questions. You mentioned—and I very much appreciate you highlighting in your remarks a determination to ensure continued OSCE engagement in Kosovo. Mr. Chairman-in-Office, I can tell you that that area of the world and the ongoing concerns are uppermost in the minds of many of us.

Yesterday, when I met with Foreign Minister Kubiš, I raised a subject with him. And he indicated that his country, if Kosovo seeks independence, would likely do two things. And I was interested in how he put it. They would be cautious and not immediately observe Kosovo's independence, if they make such a declaration. As he anticipated, it would happen on the 17th of this month. And at the same time, Slovakia would be guided by ongoing events in the European Union. And I found that at least temporizing.

But my overall concern is drawn again from my personal experience. In June, I was in Priština and Mitrovica. And I can tell you of the OSCE mission work there that I had an opportunity to observe. They're on-the-ground work.

The OSCE mission in Kosovo complemented by the tremendous activities that the KFOR forces put forward to keep the peace there is one of, in my judgment, the most successful OSCE missions, and professional, and capable of working with the various factions in that area.

Now, as you and I know, they have become, in some respects—the OSCE mission—the pivot off of which our good friends in Russia seem to place great emphasis on these missions are not worthy, according to them. I don't know whether it is just their success in Kosovo, or whether it's perceived that they are one-sided or not objective.

But I certainly—I always ask the question compared to what? If there was no OSCE mission or had not been for the last number of years, what would be the situation on the ground there today? And how much closer would the parties be to arriving at a resolution of what is, by anybody's standards, a substantial conflict?

So I've taken a long time to posit a question. But I'd be interested to know specifically what it is that you plan, Mr. Minister; and how, if at all, we in the Helsinki Commission can complement your efforts.

Min. KANERVA. Thank you. First of all, I'm more or less speculating when saying that most probably there will be a declaration and a recognition process as well. And I think that a good guess could be that actually immediately after the declaration, those recommendations will take place.

But the challenge is afterwards. It's going to—

Mr. HASTINGS. Indeed—

Min. KANERVA [continuing.] To happen in the area among the people mainly. And when speculating, I have to say that I do hope that they will very carefully consider what is most important—the safety and well-being of all people, including minorities in Kosovo; or a decision based just on one of many principles in the Final Act of Helsinki '75. So when I visited Belgrade and Priština just last week, I have a picture what is needed in the area. If they will use veto—we don't know, but anyway, if they will use a veto [at the

OSCE], some kind of winding down process will take 3, 4 months, something like that.

But we can't remain passive. We have to do something on our side as well at the same time. And it means that the negotiations must start immediately on the terms of the new OSCE engagement in Kosovo. I think that it is very, very needed. The KFOR will remain there. Their status is very clear. We know that unique operation of the OSCE must continue there, so that human rights monitoring occurs all over Kosovo, including the north, as you mentioned, as some minority enclaves as well.

The mandate of the new OSCE presence in Kosovo would attempt to capitalize on its strengths, so other international actors can, in a more targeted manner, focus on their own strengths. But, at the same time, the OSCE needs to be prepared to down size its activities and in a short period of time at that, have another actor replace it in undertaking its unique operations.

And what is also needed—and I want to underline here, we do hope in Europe—is that the United States will also remain in Kosovo. We really need your presence and your very much indeed in the area.

Mr. HASTINGS. Yes, sir.

Min. KANERVA. Those are most sensitive and delicate challenges in Kosovo today. So capacity building in support and implementing elements of the standards put forward by the U.N. special envoy Ahtisaari. And this is the most important idea and most important element in the process, also afterwards. And in the name of Ahtisaari plan, I want to say that we will do our best, our utmost, to get the new mandate for the OSCE, if the mandate will be used by some countries.

And I have the promise that some critical countries—I don't want to name any names. But I have an impression that they understand that there's a need to continue the presence of the OSCE as well after the independence process.

Mr. HASTINGS. Well, I certainly hope so. I understand also from your remarks that you plan to visit Azerbaijan soon as part of a visit to the South Caucasus region. Are you prepared, Mr. Minister, to raise the deterioration of conditions for media with officials in Baku?

And, in addition, there seemed to be substantial numbers of controversial arrests there. And I would urge that you at least put it on their agenda that those matters be looked at. But certainly, the emphasis on the conditions of the media; or, better put, what is it that you plan? And again, we are hopeful at all times to be complimentary of your effort by under girding them with appropriate hearings and briefings here and reports as well as visits of our own.

Min. KANERVA. You are really well-informed about my schedules and my travel plans. I'm really preparing my visit. And I do hope that I will be very well-informed about the circumstances about Azerbaijan. Of course, we know that we have very many concerns there today—

Mr. HASTINGS. Yes, sir.

Min. KANERVA [continuing.] Including, for example, media and some other delicate problems. And I hope that, for example, the

freedom of media will be something we can really support and upgrade; and take the note that these kind of basic elements of the area, of the nation, must be handled in the proper way.

Mr. HASTINGS. With your permission, we will provide to your good offices information that we have collected on the media situation, so that you may use your good offices and peruse this matter.

I also am aware that you talked about the fragile situation in Afghanistan. And I also am mindful that Finland is actively present on the ground in that country. How would you, Mr. Chair-in-Office, assess the prospects of the OSCE to play a role in assisting that OSCE Partner country in the numerous challenges that it faces?

Min. KANERVA. Yes. All of us, are aware of related decisions made in Madrid 2 months ago. I was happy to notice that we could make some common conclusions in matters concerning Afghanistan. Afghanistan is very actively part of our Finnish political debate. And we had a broad discussion on that country in the Finnish Parliament just some weeks ago. What will be our own, our national, responsibility, in Afghanistan? And you know that we want to increase gradually our responsibility by training those [inaudible] processes and training the Army officials to take care of the situation in Afghanistan, and to explore how the OSCE could contribute to the long-term security and stability in Afghanistan; and to show it ideas for the U.S. engagement in this initial bit.

But it is extremely important that also the OSCE will be there. And the Secretary General of our Organization is now seeking proposals from the participating States on what this cooperation could include. And I hope that, even if Finland is not a big country, but our model and our attitude could also provide some kind of example for the other small nations, so that financial and personal resources support border security projects in Tajikistan, for example, which borders on Afghanistan.

I trust that, for example, capacity building for border, customs, and police personnel of Afghanistan will be supported by all OSCE countries. And just now I underline this kind of approach concerning Afghanistan, and our organization's support.

Mr. HASTINGS. Yes, sir. Mr. Chair-in-Office, for all the years that you and I have been friends and each of us and colleagues of ours having participated actively in the fundamental work of the OSCE, we continue to not be able to perpetuate the good will that, from time to time, surfaces with our friends in Russia; and then seemingly tapers off.

In your remarks, you highlighted that this is the year that we'll be celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Only as a stream of conscious and with no firm recommendation, but I would follow up in personal conversations with you about trying to draw together at least some—I don't like the term "council of elders", because I then put myself in that category age-wise. But it doesn't always mean age. Sometimes it's experience.

But we need dialogue in the OSCE, and we need engagement. We need people that know each other to a relative degree and can have meaningful discussions while maintaining mutual respect. Government-to-government, there are relations. Finland has good relations with Russia as would be expected. The United States

seems to blow hot and cold insofar as various administrations are concerned.

But those of us that are really in the inner workings of interfacing with this country have our responsibilities as well. I, for example, didn't mention to you when I was in Finland, but when I became Chairman of the Helsinki Commission, I specifically chose the subject of energy security to highlight that; not to get rid of the human rights aspect of what we do or the lecture and observations, but to put a different light on an area of critical importance for all of the participating States.

So I would hope that you will give thought to developing a group that maybe could advise you and the Troika and come together from time to time to try to reduce these tensions. If we were to tick them off, Russia seems to be upset about election observation.

Well, what motivated me personally to address Secretary Powell, who in turn accepted that recommendation and extended, for the first time in 2004 rather—the election observation of American elections. I thought Russia was right. And I said so. If I—me, I had been to Russia and numerous other countries observing elections. And it seems only right that they should be able to come to Ft. Lauderdale or to my home and observe mine.

So let me use another example. One of the things that the Russians say is that we spend a lot of time addressing the frozen conflicts. And I don't think we should reduce anything. If anything, we should intensify, as you have indicated in your outstanding proposals, our efforts to try and resolve those ongoing conflicts.

But I think that they're correct when they say but we don't place very much emphasis on conflicts in the West. And if I just use the bass (ph) as the for example, we go to Madrid all the time. But it's almost as if it's an elephant in the room. We never really are about the business of trying to address it.

And there are other areas in the West. Fortunately much of what took place in the United Kingdom has resolved itself. But it certainly wasn't with the OSCE pushing anything.

So I guess what I'm calling for is this. If I know Speaker Gryzlov, and if I know Foreign Minister Lavrov, and if other Members of Congress, Republican and Democrat here and in other parliaments and in other ministries, know these people, then there must be some 20 or 30 of us that could have an emphasis with some regularity, if nothing but annually, to see if we can be among the ones that bridge differences and with specific emphasis on the OSCE.

The OSCE is one organization that is really doing something that is meaningful—and maybe that's why we come under the kind of attack that we do—it's the one organization that people seem to want to diminish. My government just recently has offered a 20-percent cut in its contribution to the OSCE. I disagree with that. And I said so to Secretary Rice. I think it is particularly harmful.

And I'm hopeful, in another administration, Republican or Democrat—McCain, Obama, or Clinton or whoever gets elected—that I will be one of the ones that will say to them restore these funds for the OSCE and its missions in order to be able to accomplish things that are beneficial for this country and for the 55 other participating States.

Now, in there somewhere may be something that you'll react to. We'll let that be the final—

Min. KANERVA. Sir, we know that our organization is the specific one to cover the major geographical area from Vancouver to Vladivostok. And even if we are facing some troubles now and then, I think that for Russia, the OSCE is anyway a special one. They don't have too many forums to be involved in the problems we try testing in our area. And that's why I think that some claim that inside our organization, there's a too-strong polarization. I don't totally agree with that.

Of course, the main thing is that we have interdependence in our organization. And we have to understand that. Are we from West? Or are we from East? And we need that kind of values.

My idea is to keep some kind of balance between the different baskets—between the three baskets. It's not the mathematical effort. It's not a mathematical issue. No. It's a political one. There must be political, economic and military division in a way. And you know the baskets are different. And we know that, today, Russia is saying that we are just dealing with those human dimension problems.

And we are, very much indeed; because they are so important for us. But we are also dealing with those conflicts.

Mr. HASTINGS. That's right.

Min. KANERVA. Which are very important for the Russians. But we are not dealing with the conflicts on the area of Russia, which—in Russia's interest CIS area. No. We have conflicts wherever. And if our experience can help those conflicts, to resolve the problems in those conflicts, we are ready to do it. We are ready to try. We don't give up at all.

Mr. HASTINGS. Right.

Min. KANERVA. And we are ready to do it together with Russia. We don't plan. We don't block them. And we need them, very much indeed. And the only constructive idea also in the future then when they are trying to promote East to get Russia involved in the international community in various ways. And I'm ready to follow your ideas and try to think over your suggestion. Thank you very, very much indeed.

Mr. HASTINGS. No, thank you, Mr. Chair-in-Office. And I am certainly grateful to your fine Ambassador who works very actively with us. And it's deeply appreciated as well as those that accompany you, with your staff. They are outstanding. And again, I express my regret at not being able to be in Helsinki for a longer period of time.

But I assure you, somewhere along my travels and your continuing efforts on behalf of the OSCE, that I am hopeful of being able to get another opportunity to visit with you in Finland. And if you would please give my best to the Speaker of your Parliament. And I appreciated his courtesies as well when I was in Helsinki.

So enjoy yourself while you are here. And I hope our weather gets better. There were several Members, particularly Ms. Solis, that had questions. And with your permission, we will submit them to you. And maybe you could respond for the record of this hearing.

Min. KANERVA. Thank you very, very much.
Mr. HASTINGS. This hearing is adjourned.
[Whereupon, at 11:55 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

APPENDICES

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, CO-CHAIRMAN, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate this opportunity to engage with the Foreign Minister in his capacity as Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE for 2008. Indeed, Finland has provided important leadership in the Helsinki Process, predating the signing of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act. It is good to have a steady hand at the helm, especially as the OSCE faces potentially rough waters ahead during this year and beyond.

My personal involvement with OSCE dates back to the struggle of Soviet Jewry in the dark days of the U.S.S.R. This year marks 15 years of service on this Commission and it was in Helsinki that same year that I began my active involvement in the work of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. These years have witnessed the lows of a genocidal war in Bosnia, bloody conflict in Chechnya, and repression in Kosovo. But we have also seen promising signs, with popular revolts in Serbia, Georgia and Ukraine. The work of the OSCE, in all of its dimensions, is far from over with much to be done to bring healing from the legacy of past and lingering conflicts to helping those seeking to consolidate democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

The Helsinki Commission continues to play a unique role in the Helsinki Process. One such example concerns the spike of anti-Semitic violence that broke out in numerous participating States earlier this decade. In a bipartisan effort, Commissioners responded, making use of the OSCE PA and other avenues to elevate attention within the OSCE to the distinctive threat posed by anti-Semitism and related violence. We appreciate your prompt reappointment of the three personal representatives on tolerance, including one with a portfolio specifically covering anti-Semitism. I also note your plans to host an expert meeting on hate crimes this year.

In recent weeks we have convened a series of hearings to assess the ongoing work of the OSCE in this regard and have heard from experts, including Professor Weisskirchen. These sessions have confirmed the importance of maintaining a distinct focus on anti-Semitism, and resisting attempts by some to reduce the attention under some kinds of generic tolerance rubric. It has also become clear that the personal representatives need some form of meaningful support mechanism. Perhaps some arrangement could be put in place by the troika of past, present, and future OSCE chairs, to ensure continuity.

Mr. Minister, over the years the United States has played an important leadership role in promoting the core principles enshrined in the Final Act. Effective leadership, however, requires that America lead by example when it comes to implementation of commitments, participation in meetings at all levels, and matching our desire for the OSCE to play a robust role with the necessary resources.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH,
RANKING MINORITY MEMBER, COMMISSION ON SECURITY
AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and welcome to Minister Kanerva, and to everyone who has joined us this morning.

Minister, I appreciate your commitment as Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE to keep the fight against human trafficking at the top of the OSCE's agenda. Recently I was appointed the OSCE PA President's Special Representative on Human Trafficking, and so I look forward to working with you on this issue.

The OSCE countries have made a lot of progress in the fight against trafficking. Many of them have passed national legislation and created national programs of action, above all for helping the victims of trafficking. But much remains to be done: each year within the OSCE region between one and two hundred thousand people are trafficked in the OSCE region. We cannot accept this!

So I welcome the energy your country, Finland, has brought to the fight against trafficking, especially its stress on prevention as well as its attention to child victims. In this regard, I understand that Finland plans to convene a series of meetings later this year on human trafficking. I would like to suggest that the OSCE put a more sustained focus on the sexual exploitation of children through trafficking, sex tourism and child pornography. The nature of these heinous crimes against children demands concerted cooperation and action on the part of the OSCE countries.

As you may know, my good friends Senator Ben Cardin and Representative Alcee Hastings and I used this Commission as a forum to lead a bipartisan effort to raise the issue of human trafficking. This Commission held its first hearing on trafficking in June 1999, and I vividly recall the dismissive attitudes so many took at that time. Irrefutable evidence of the prevalence of this horrible crime has since convinced the doubters.

The result of those efforts was that we passed three major pieces of trafficking legislation—The Trafficking Victim's Protection Act of 2000 and the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Acts of 2003 and 2005, while another reauthorization has passed the House and is awaiting action in the United States Senate.

So this Commission has a great history of achievement in the fight against trafficking, and I thank Representative Hastings for maintaining that focus, both on the Commission and as one of the things this Commission brings to the OSCE.

I also want to stress the importance of keeping the OSCE sharply focused on anti-Semitism—one of the most persistent evils in the OSCE region.

Also as a result of hearings held by this Commission, my good friends and I convinced the OSCE to take up the fight against anti-Semitism. We held annual conferences, and the OSCE States made commitments in fact-gathering and education that should make a real difference in the fight against anti-Semitism.

But two weeks ago, at a hearing called by my good friend Mr. Hastings, we learned that many OSCE countries have not followed through. Within the OSCE, when it comes to the fight against the pernicious hate of anti-Semitism, human rights fatigue and indif-

ference is all too apparent. I saw it myself at the OSCE conference in Bucharest last June.

I appeal to you, in your term as Chairman-in-Office, not to allow the OSCE to give in to this fatigue and indifference! Anti-Semitism remains what it has always been, a unique evil, a distinct form of intolerance, the oldest form of religious bigotry, and a malignant disease of the heart that has often led to murder. It continues to threaten our Jewish brothers and sisters, and so the OSCE must redouble its efforts in the fight against the scourge of anti-Semitism.

**PREPARED STATEMENT OF H.E. ILKKA KANERVA, MINISTER
FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, OSCE CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE**

Mr Chairman, Honorable Congressman Hastings
Distinguished Members of the Helsinki Commission,

I thank you for this opportunity to speak before the United States Helsinki Commission as the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE. I would like to use this occasion to express my deepest sympathy for the passing away of the Honorable Tom Lantos, Chairman of the Committee of Foreign Affairs and one of the most distinguished members of the United States Congress in recent times.

It is a great pleasure to travel from Helsinki to Washington and be received here by the Helsinki Commission. The symbolic name of your Commission reminds us of a breakthrough in East-West relations. It also reminds us Finns of the role that our country had in making it happen.

As a longstanding member of parliament myself, I fully understand the importance of the parliamentary dimension of the OSCE. The role of elected legislators is to embody the aspirations of our peoples and to voice their concerns in all OSCE countries. Therefore, I warmly welcomed the invitation to this hearing.

Mr Chairman,

Since the time when the CSCE was born in Helsinki in 1975, Europe has been transformed for the better. Divisions that once seemed permanent have been swept away, and liberty has been restored to entire regions and societies.

Nonetheless, we still have much work to do. While the front lines of the Cold War have been transformed into tourist attractions, there is the risk of new divisions taking hold in the OSCE area. Old threats have taken a new shape, longstanding conflicts remain unresolved and new challenges require firm and unified responses.

But as the Chairman-in-Office I see that these challenges could also provide an opportunity to demonstrate the strength and vitality of the basic OSCE values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

In this spirit, I wish to reflect with you today some of the key issues facing the Finnish Chairmanship and the OSCE in general.

Mr Chairman,

Issues related to election observation have dominated the beginning of the Finnish Chairmanship. After the ODIHR did not observe the Russian Duma elections last December, much work went into an effort to secure credible OSCE election observation in the forthcoming Russian presidential elections.

I am satisfied that we could help Russia and the ODIHR to engage in an active dialogue to resolve their differences on the parameters of the observation. The deal was close. But unfortunately we will not have an ODIHR election observation mission to the Russian Presidential Elections. We also will not have an OSCE Parliamentary Assembly mission in Russia this time.

Let me be clear about the Chairman's view on election observation. The OSCE commitments oblige the participating States to invite and host an OSCE election observation mission. These missions should cover all the key phases of the electoral process—candidate and voter registration, electoral campaign, media coverage, complaints and appeals. The ODIHR must continue to be in a posi-

tion to determine the length and size of observation missions on professional grounds, in order to produce a meaningful assessment and recommendations benefiting the observed country.

The ultimate aim of election observation is to support the hosting country in enhancing its democratic process. The recent observation missions in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Georgia have all produced tangible recommendations to bolster the democratic institutions of their host countries. I also expect the election observation mission in the forthcoming Armenian presidential elections to do the same.

I am convinced that continued dialogue on election-related issues among the participating States—with the involvement of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly—is essential in the OSCE. We should all be willing to engage with a constructive attitude.

Mr Chairman,

Last week I visited both Belgrade and Priština. Kosovo is very much on your mind these days—as it is certainly on my mind.

The OSCE has played an important role in Kosovo—in establishing and consolidating local institutions, in promoting democratization, the rule of law, as well as human and minority rights. Because the OSCE has remained “status-neutral,” it has retained a unique ability to work with all ethnic communities in promoting stability and democratic development. It is my firm belief that the OSCE work in Kosovo is and will be beneficial to all Kosovars.

The outcome of the status process could have a negative impact on the OSCE’s engagement in Kosovo. You are well aware that the OSCE participating States remain deeply divided over the issue. This disagreement could lead to the current Mission’s termination. It would be a grave mistake for the OSCE and the entire international community if we were to leave it at that.

I am determined to ensure continued OSCE engagement in Kosovo regardless of the status process. I am aware of the fact that any participating State has the possibility to use a veto and to end the mandate of the present mission—the mission which at the moment comprises 800 people and which has an immense effect on the viability of the civil society. Should this happen, I am prepared to immediately start the negotiations on a revised mandate for the OSCE mission. I am convinced that all participating States agree on the need for continued OSCE engagement in Kosovo.

Mr Chairman,

The Finnish Chairmanship has put the so called frozen or protracted conflicts in Moldova, Georgia and Nagorno-Karabakh at the top of our agenda. I will personally visit all the conflict regions. I have already nominated a special envoy to promote any useful negotiations on conflict resolution.

One of the first things I have done was to visit Ukraine and Moldova to examine possibilities to kick-start the stalled negotiations on the Moldova—Transnistria conflict. The government of Moldova and the leadership of Transnistria indicated their willingness to re-engage and I have tasked my special envoy to see what can be done to take the process forward. I acknowledge the difficulties in front of us but we cannot give up. The parties should be encouraged to engage in serious negotiations, and any momentum created should be fully used.

In two weeks time I plan to visit Southern Caucasus, where we have witnessed worrying tensions lately. The Finnish Chairmanship will use all possibilities to build trust between the parties and promote conflict resolution in South Ossetia, Georgia and in Nagorno-Karabakh between Armenia and Azerbaijan. I will work closely with the three Co-chairs of the Minsk Group, the United States, France and Russia.

Mr Chairman,

Ministers pledged in the Madrid meeting last November to intensify OSCE activities to secure the borders between the Central Asian States and Afghanistan. The ministers also decided to enhance the involvement of the OSCE with Afghanistan—especially in areas related to border security and management, policing and the fight against drug trafficking.

This work is now underway on two tracks.

In Madrid, I listened to my Tajik colleague's worries about their over 750 mile border with Afghanistan and their wish to increase co-operation with the OSCE to ensure better and more secure border management. He said that if this border is not holding, it means a great danger for the whole Central Asian region. This is why we have to do all we can for the security of Afghanistan, Central Asia and the OSCE area in general. These projects must lead to a long-term OSCE commitment to Central Asian border security and management. I regard this as a priority. Finland will contribute financial and personnel resources to get this work speedily underway.

At the same time we are discussing whether the OSCE might eventually become active on Afghan territory. The OSCE Secretary General is currently collecting ideas from participating States and relevant international organizations.

Mr Chairman,

Your Commission has shown great interest in developing the OSCE human dimension. I would like to briefly lay out some of our plans, and I am looking forward to hearing your thoughts in this respect.

The starting point of the Finnish Chairmanship is that the OSCE is a value-based organization that actively promotes our common values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. We stress the full implementation of the human rights commitments by the participating States.

Our main operational priorities in the human dimension are combating trafficking in human beings, promoting tolerance and non-discrimination as well as gender mainstreaming in all OSCE activities.

In the past 10 years or so, the OSCE has engaged in combating all forms of human trafficking. Many OSCE countries have developed much needed cross-dimensional and victim-centred approaches to human trafficking, established co-ordinating structures and elaborated national programmes of action. However, much needs to be done to tackle this form of modern-day slavery.

Europe continues to be plagued by the rise of intolerance, including a resurgence of anti-Semitism. The Finnish Chairmanship will seek ways to promote tolerance and fight all forms of discrimination within the OSCE. Our aim is that the emphasis would be on

the implementation of the tolerance and non-discrimination commitments. Parliamentarians have a vital role to play in debating tolerance issues and in passing laws against discrimination.

This year we will be celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This anniversary will also underline the role of the brave people who defend human rights often in difficult situations. The Finnish Chairmanship will seek to increase support for their invaluable work.

Mr Chairman,

Every international organization should review its work in order to remain relevant to its membership. The OSCE is not exception and in recent years we have had a lively discussion on the reform of the OSCE. In my view we should focus on improving the OSCE's effectiveness and its capacity to better serve the participating States and their citizens.

The Madrid ministerial decision to grant the OSCE Chairmanship to Greece in 2009, Kazakhstan in 2010 and Lithuania in 2011 offers us an unprecedented opportunity for long-term planning of the Organization's activities. I have invited my colleagues from the future Chairmanships of Kazakhstan and Lithuania to meet with the current Troika countries Spain, Finland and Greece to develop ideas for longer-term priorities. I am convinced there are many issues where the "Quintet" can add value and lead to more coherent OSCE action in the next few years.

We are facing challenging times in international politics. These tensions are reflected also in the OSCE. This is why the Organization needs clearly defined priorities, on which its activities can be planned. The Finnish Chairmanship will do its utmost to maintain a forward movement in the OSCE in spite of the present difficulties.

Mr. Chairman,

The Helsinki Commission embodies the longstanding engagement of the United States with the OSCE and the values that underpin it. The OSCE can only work with the full engagement of its participating States. The United States has always played a key role, and must continue to do so, if we are to achieve the ambitious goals we have set for our Organization.

I want to thank the United States Helsinki Commission for its much-appreciated support for the OSCE over the years. I would like to pay tribute to you, Congressman Hastings, for your extraordinary leadership of the Parliamentary Assembly, and I am pleased to have established an excellent relationship with the present President of the Parliamentary Assembly, Mr. Göran Lenmarker of Sweden.

I recognize the central role that the Commission has had in defining United States policy in the OSCE. Perhaps the most rewarding recognition, however, comes from Henry Kissinger, who in a hearing held before the Helsinki Commission in 2005 confessed that he did not expect that the provisions of the Helsinki Final Act would reach the scope and the impact that they now have. I fully endorse his words. The long-standing commitment of the Commission has paid off.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, and the distinguished Members of the Commission for your dedication and your support for the Finnish OSCE Chairmanship in 2008.



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