

HEARING ON CHECHNYA

HEARING
BEFORE THE
COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND
COOPERATION IN EUROPE
ONE HUNDRED FOURTH CONGRESS
FIRST SESSION

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HEARING ON CHECHNYA

MONDAY, MAY 1, 1995

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE,
Washington, DC.

The hearing was held in the Rayburn House Office Building, room 2172, at 2 p.m., Hon. Christopher H. Smith, Chairman, presiding.

Commissioners present: Hon. Christopher H. Smith, Chairman; Hon. Steny H. Hoyer and Hon. Frank Wolf.

Also present: Sergei Adamovich Kovalev, Dr. Elena Bonner, Alexey Semyonov (interpreter), Yevgenia Albats, and Dr. Ariel Cohen.

Mr. SMITH. This hearing will come to order.

Ladies and gentlemen and honored guests, I want to thank you for coming to this hearing. I am Chris Smith, the Chairman of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. This is the third of the Commission's hearings on the subject of the crisis in Chechnya.

It is a great honor and pleasure to welcome today our colleague and respected member of the Russian Duma, Sergei Adamovich Kovalev. Mr. Kovalev is well known to anyone who has followed the course of human rights and democratic development in Russia. A former political prisoner, Mr. Kovalev has been extremely critical of the Yeltsin government's policies in Chechnya, and during the first weeks of the Russian attack on Grozny, he bravely went there so that he could tell the truth about what was happening—from where it was happening.

Congressman Frank Wolf and I first met Mr. Kovalev in Moscow in 1989. We were on our way to the Perm labor camp on behalf of political prisoners who were being held there. His insights were invaluable then, and his insights today, I think, will help this Commission do its job properly.

Besides Mr. Kovalev, the Commission is honored to welcome today two other witnesses of exceptional knowledge and experience in Russian affairs:

Yevgenia Albats is an investigative journalist from Moscow. She became prominent during the period of "glasnost" and "perestroika" with her penetrating exposes of the KGB, published in the *Moscow News*. As a columnist for the Moscow newspaper *Izvestiya*, she spent much of this past January in Chechnya. Ms. Albats is the author of *A State Within the State: The KGB and its Hold on Russia*.

Dr. Ariel Cohen is the Salvatori Fellow for Eastern and Central Europe at the Heritage Foundation. As an analyst specializing in Russian politics, economics, and law in Washington, DC., Dr.

Cohen is a permanent commentator with Voice of America, Radio Liberty/Radio Free Europe and *The Washington Times*. He is also the author of the forthcoming book *Russian Imperialism: Development and Decline*.

The Romans, it was said, at times, "create[d] a wilderness and call[ed] it peace." In Chechnya, Moscow has created rubble and called it "the restoration of legal structures." Since January of this year, the Russian army, with its overwhelming troop strength and firepower, has captured Grozny and established control over most of the country. In the process, the Russian army brutally reduced Grozny's former 400,000 population to half. Thousands of Russians living in the city died alongside their Chechen neighbors during the shelling and bombing of their city.

A few days ago, Russia announced suspension of military operations in Chechnya until May 15, after the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Allied victory over Nazi Germany. This is a welcome move, and we hope it will lead to a just and lasting resolution of the conflict. But it has come too late for hundreds of persons trapped by the hostilities. In late March, the Russian army launched an offensive against Chechen forces that had retreated south of Grozny, but the offensive was not limited to military targets. In the town of Samashky, for example, Chechen, Russian, and foreign witnesses reported bloodchilling atrocities carried out by Russian soldiers against civilians. One Russian observer described it as "nothing less than a genocide."

At this moment, a long-term mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe is being established in Grozny. This mission's task is to promote respect for human rights; to foster development of democratic institutions; to assist in holding elections; to facilitate the return of refugees and the delivery of humanitarian aid; and to work for a peaceful resolution of the crisis "in conformity with the principle of territorial integrity of the Russian Federation." The Commission intends to follow the progress of this mission very closely. U.S. tax money must not be used to subsidize some diplomatic "band-aids" on the wounds caused by Russia's war machine. We trust the mission will carry out its mandate faithfully, and the Russian Government will provide maximum cooperation in its efforts. There must be justice for all the people of Chechnya, and those guilty of human rights violations and war crimes, regardless of which side they served, should be brought to account.

I wish to make it clear that our criticism of Russia's policy in Chechnya is not an issue of "United States versus Russia" but rather "humanity versus inhumanity." We are adding our voices to those of deeply concerned Russian citizens such as Sergei Kovalev, Dr. Elena Bonner, and many others who are protesting their government's policy in that troubled part of the world. The manner in which Russia resolves the Chechnya crisis may well decide its political direction into the next century. If the political and military forces that precipitated the bloody violence set the tone in Moscow for governance, then undoubtedly both the people of Russia and the entire world will suffer the baleful effects. In a few weeks, our President and other Western leaders will be in Moscow to help commemorate the end of one brutal chapter in Europe's past. I

hope the Chechen experience will not be the harbinger of equally brutal chapters in Europe's future.

Again I want to thank you, our distinguished witnesses, and say that at the conclusion of your testimony we'll be very privileged to hear a statement from Dr. Elena Bonner. When we had our first hearing on this crisis earlier this year, Dr. Bonner graced us with her very fine testimony and her very outspoken statement.

So, Dr. Bonner if you could join us at the witness table I would appreciate that. Mr. Kovalev, if you could begin your testimony. Your full statement will be made a part of the record. Proceed as you would like.

Mr. KOVALEV. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I cannot begin my testimony without expressing my condolences to the American people on the terrible tragedy of the explosion in Oklahoma City.

Unfortunately, it's one more instance of violence being expressed in our cruel world. What happened in Oklahoma City is an example of violence by extremists, violence which is directed against the state that is trying to ensure the rights of its citizens and the rule of law. Today I will be talking mostly about violence of another kind: violence by the state directed against its citizens.

I think I will shorten the time required for my testimony if I now ask my interpreter and friend, Alexey Semyonov, to read my prepared statement in English. Afterwards I will be very glad to answer any questions.

I will begin with a few sentences on what is happening in Chechnya, but I will not go into details which have been reported in the press.

For the last 5 months, Russian Government forces have been conducting brutal and bloody warfare there. Tens of thousands of civilians have died in the course of the fighting, and hundreds of thousands have been turned into refugees. Russian aircraft, artillery, and tanks have destroyed the city of Grozny, which had a pre-war population of 400,000.

The army is carrying out punitive expeditions against other localities. I've just returned from the Chechen village of Samashky, where this kind of punitive expedition killed a hundred villagers or more and burned to the ground a great number of homes.

Hundreds of persons have been arbitrarily detained in the course of police operations that are being conducted in areas of Chechnya that have come under the control of Russian Government forces. The detainees are brought to special "filtration camps" used to screen Chechens for pro-Dudaev activities or sympathies. Detainees have been beaten and sometimes tortured. There are reports of executions without trials.

From the very beginning, official government information about events in Chechnya has been based on brazen lies. The Russian Government at first disclaimed all knowledge of the tanks and aircraft that attacked Grozny last November 25th and 26th, claiming that this operation was probably the responsibility of the Chechen opposition to Dudaev. Soon however, the Russian Defense Ministry had to acknowledge that the tanks were Russian tanks manned by Russian soldiers recruited by the Russian security service, and the

helicopters that attacked the Grozny airport were Russian helicopters.

When I was in Grozny last December, the Russian Government on two occasions claimed that bombing of Grozny had been stopped by order of President Yeltsin, even as I could hear the roar of Russian planes and the explosions that were destroying the city.

A recent example of official lying is the insistently repeated tale that a group of elders from Samashky were fired upon by Dudaev's troops, a report that served as a pretext for the punitive action against Samashky. I and my colleagues had an opportunity to meet and talk with the alleged victims of this incident, and they assured us that the report was untrue.

Why was the decision taken to begin the war in Chechnya? Was President Yeltsin's decision to use military force in Chechnya unavoidable? Could he have done something other than use force against the rebels? Did the proclaimed necessity of restoring law and order in the region lead inevitably to war?

I have no sympathy for Dudaev's unilateral declaration of Chechen independence. There was much to criticize about Chechnya's human rights record during the 3 years it was governed by Dudaev and his administration. But for quite some time both before and after the outbreak of fighting it would have been possible to solve the problem of Chechen separation by political means. All attempts to do so were systematically and deliberately torpedoed by the military high command and by others in the government in Moscow. With respect to the alleged aim of restoring law and order in Chechnya, I think it is sufficient to say that many actions there of the Federal authorities are gross violations of the Constitution and laws of Russia.

It is important to analyze the causes of the war in Chechnya in order to avoid the occurrence of similar conflicts elsewhere, but the urgent task right now is to bring about an effective cease-fire throughout Chechnya, to end the bloodshed, and to open negotiations for a just and durable peace.

I understand that the members of the U.S. Congress are concerned most of all with the effect of the Chechen crisis on Russia's domestic and foreign policies and its implications for international stability, so I will share with you my ideas on these topics.

The Chechen war, as it has been waged and is still being waged, is the external expression of the rise of a definitive political tendency. It is the tendency to assert "derzhavnost," perhaps best translated as "quasi-totalitarian statism," as the supreme value of the new Russia instead of the liberal values proclaimed by the Russian Constitution. Such statism insists that the unconstrained force of the state takes precedence over the rights and liberties of the individual.

Such statism is not the same thing as a strong and effective system of government in a rule-of-law state. Such statism is incompatible with the rule-of-law, with democracy, and with human rights. Such statism is closely connected with messianic, imperialist nationalism, with anti-Western attitudes, with the militarist, authoritarian, and totalitarian traditions of our past. Such statism is in essence the restoration in Russia of the old Communist system under the flag of a new ideology.

How should democratic countries react to this? I hesitate to suggest specific positive actions, but the one thing I know for sure is how the West should not react to events in Russia.

First: In no event should the West turn away from Russia and leave it to its fate. That would soon lead to Americans and the rest of the world once again having to live with a dangerous, aggressive, unpredictable neighbor. Sooner or later this totalitarian superpower will find it cramped to share one planet with free countries. Then the West will have to step in and act, but the cost will greatly surpass the cost of attention to Russia's situation now.

Second: Involvement of the West in Russia's affairs should not be reduced to unconditional support of a particular leader. Clearly, President Yeltsin is not the same thing as President Zhironovsky. But I don't understand why this means it's necessary to support Yeltsin even in those cases when his actions are exactly the same as Zhironovsky's would be in his place. Speaking frankly, I dare say that in trying to emulate Zhironovsky and breaking with democracy, President Yeltsin has lost any real chance for reelection. Not that Zhironovsky's chances are any better. For this reason alone, the choice "Yeltsin or Zhironovsky" seems a false and unrealistic dichotomy.

Support should be given not to individuals but to concrete political steps which will help establish democracy in Russia; that is, strong, effective government under constant and direct public control. The emerging institutions of civil society which will be capable of exercising such control require serious and energetic support. But support for democratic reforms in Russia should be combined with equally serious and energetic opposition to any actions by government bodies in Russia which depart from the values of a democratic society.

Only a selective and targeted combination of support and pressure can assist the transformation of the Russian state from its historical role as the bané of the Russian people into a guarantee of their prosperity and security, from a continual threat to neighboring countries into their reliable and equal partner.

Third: The West must see in Russia not a weak and dependent client, not a defeated enemy of the cold war years, but an equal and independent partner. In developing its Russian policy, the West, and in particular the United States, must not think that a weak and isolated Russia would be advantageous for them. This would be an extremely dangerous illusion. A weak and isolated Russia would be an explosive charge capable in the not-too-distant future of shattering not only Europe's security system, but the whole world's. Recall that the Versailles Treaty of 1919 was followed by the Munich Agreement of 1938. And what followed thereafter can't be forgotten.

I realize that it is a complex and arduous task for the United States to work out a new Russian policy, free from both euphoria and hostility, balanced and rational, distinguishing national interests from national egoism. Simple prescriptions can only harm this project. But who said that the art of politics is a simple matter?

Mr. SMITH. I want to thank you for your very, very strong statement and more importantly for the oppressed and those who have suffered for human rights atrocities in Chechnya.

You have been an outspoken advocate of humanity, and I think for that you are a world diplomat and a world statesman, and I know that members of our Commission are very, very grateful for your candor and your courage. I do thank you for your statement here today.

I'd like to ask Dr. Elena Bonner if she would like to make some comments for the Commission?

Dr. BONNER. I want to express my gratitude to the Commission for a chance to make a statement here.

Together with many, many people around the world I express my condolences to the American people for the tragedy in Oklahoma City.

I am certain that such violent acts, which were commonly referred to as terrorist acts, have common roots no matter where in the world they are taking place. Doesn't matter if it takes place on the River Jordan or the River Valerik, which is in Chechnya, or in the United States. All these acts are a threat to humanity everywhere in the world, but the most terrible of them are the acts committed by the States.

Just as Mr. Kovalev before me, in order not to take too much time, I will ask that my statement be read by Alexey Semyonov.

The second OSCE Commission hearings on Chechnya are taking place at the time when the President of the United States is preparing to leave for Moscow for the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the victory in World War II. The pomp and the grandeur with which the Russian authorities are marking this date are intended not only to honor those who perished in World War II or those who had walked its hard roads; these celebrations are also intended to hide the tragedy of the Chechen people.

The coming to Moscow of the U.S. President and of the heads of other democratic states will be justified if they refuse to be satisfied with a temporary moratorium of military actions and vague promises. They need to press for real peace. That requires:

1. The agreement by Russia to establish a complete cease-fire and to begin the negotiations with the Government of President Dudaev, revocation by the Prosecutor General of the warrant for the arrest of Dudaev.

2. The release of all prisoners of war and of the detainees of the "filtration" camps.

3. The beginning, under the international observation, of the preparations for the withdrawal of the Russian army.

4. A responsible promise to allow participation of Dudaev and his supporters in the future elections. Otherwise elections will be just one more lie.

I appeal to the OSCE Commission to initiate a respective resolution by the U.S. Congress addressed to the President of the United States as well as parliaments and governments of other democratic states. Otherwise, once the Red Square military parade and the sumptuous dinner at the Kremlin are over, and the servants have cleared the tables and drunk up the left-over champagne, the army of the Russian Federation will proceed to bring about the final solution of the Chechen question.

More than 50 years ago the ideas of final solutions brought no benefits to the German people and have been paid for dearly by all those who stood up against the Third Reich, including Americans. It is impossible to believe that the people of the United States and you, their elected representatives, will allow the same tragedy to happen today, whether it happens on a grand scale or in a small, seemingly insignificant Chechnya.

[Signed] Elena Bonner, disabled veteran of World War II, Lieutenant of the Medical Corps, 1941–1945.

Mr. SMITH. Dr. Bonner, thank you for your testimony. Again, as this Commission has noted in the past, you too have been an absolute champion on behalf of human rights, speaking out even when it's very, very inconvenient for you to do so. We want to thank you for that leadership.

I would like to ask the ranking member of the Commission, the former Chairman of the Commission, Steny Hoyer, if he'd like to make some opening remarks.

Mr. HOYER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I want to apologize to Mr. Kovalev and Dr. Bonner for my tardiness. It was occasioned by another act of violence, the execution of a Prince George's County police officer, shot eleven times in the head from behind.

Mr. Kovalev, I understand that you started your statement with an expression of regret about Oklahoma City. All of us lament that. It was not, obviously, government policy as some demented souls apparently try to ascribe it.

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you and would like to commend you for holding this hearing. I'm particularly pleased to welcome Sergei Kovalev, with whom I've had the great privilege of meeting in the White House, in Moscow, and on a number of other occasions. I regret, however, that we meet under these circumstances. I'm also pleased to welcome and join you, Mr. Chairman, in congratulating Dr. Bonner. Dr. Bonner has been a champion of the rights of the Russian people, the rights of the now former Republics of the Soviet Union, and she has been one of the world's most compelling spokespersons. The world knows of the heroic efforts of both of these individuals. This recognition bears too, Mr. Kovalev, your efforts and sacrifices on behalf of human rights during the Soviet era, as well as Dr. Bonner's.

It says much, I fear, Mr. Chairman, about today's Russia that Mr. Kovalev's colleagues in the parliament voted in March to remove him as the Duma's Commissioner for Human Rights.

Mr. Chairman, over the break I had the opportunity, as you know, to attend the Executive Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly in Copenhagen. One of Mr. Kovalev's colleagues was representing Russia at the table as its member of the standing committee. Mr. Bogomolov, I believe. And we passed a resolution. While we review here the actions of the Russian Government's response to the crisis in Chechnya—and I will express some negative views about the Russian response to that crisis—the actions of the Russian delegate to the Copenhagen meeting were, in my view, dramatic, Mr. Chairman. The Russian delegate supported the committee's unanimously adopted resolution, which called to task Rus-

sian actions in Chechnya. It was interesting to see a Russian delegate support that.

Few countries need a prophet, I suggest to you, more than Russia needs Mr. Kovalev, Elena Bonner, and others to raise high the beacon. We hope they will continue to do so.

As has been mentioned, this is the third Helsinki Commission hearing since January on the disastrous policy hatched in Moscow to resolve, by armed force, the problem of relations between the government of the Russian Federation and Chechnya.

Mr. Kovalev and Dr. Bonner, I will be reviewing your testimony. Mr. Chairman, I ask that my statement be included in full in the record at this time. And I look forward to hearing further from our witnesses. [See Appendix].

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Hoyer. Without objection your statement, of course, will be made a part of the record.

Mr. Kovalev, I'd like to ask a few questions. Tell us what you think the United States' and other Western governments' policy ought to be toward Russia, and whether or not responses have been adequate both in this country and in Europe especially. Concerning the cease-fire that has been announced to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, do you construe that to be a ploy or a very meaningful and real and genuine attempt by the Russian Government to effectuate a cease-fire? What are the long term prospects of that cease-fire holding? If you could respond to that, then we'll pose some additional questions.

Dr. Bonner, please feel free, if you would like, to address these issues as well.

Mr. KOVALEV. I think the temporary cease-fire could have served as a basis for a more permanent arrangement with one condition. It is imperative to immediately start negotiations, and such negotiations should have some sort of coordinated, general plan.

The first part of such negotiations is obviously to arrange for a permanent cease-fire. The conditions for such negotiations have been stated numerous times by different forces. And for that part of negotiations, Russia has only one negotiating partner: the acting administration of the President of Chechnya, General Dudaev. But also, a more general plan should quickly be formulated for later stages of negotiations, dealing with political arrangements for the Chechen problem. Unfortunately, even the temporary cease-fire probably will not hold. And actually there are reports that both sides are violating it already.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Kovalev, could you comment on your view as to what the United States ought to be doing with regard to resolving this crisis? Dr. Bonner did you want to respond?

Dr. BONNER. I'm entirely in agreement with Sergei Kovalev's answer, and moreover the condition of a complete cease-fire is the first part of my statement. But I think that it would be impossible to conduct negotiations as long as the order or the warrant for the arrest of Dudaev stands. So it has to be revoked before the beginning of any negotiations.

Mr. KOVALEV. It is very difficult to speak about what the American policy should be while visiting United States. To determine the policy of the United States is a prerogative of the American

people and of the legislative and the executive branches of the American state. I can only pretend that I am playing a game that once was popularized by a Moscow newspaper: "If I become the President of the United States." Let's pretend.

It is a pleasure for me to repeat here the words of Andrei Sakharov, which he said back in 1988. The policies of the West in regards to Russia are becoming more complex than they were back in the 60's, 70's, or 80's. Such policy should consist of or combine two opposite elements of support and pressure. Both the support and the pressure should have well-defined targets. And be well controlled.

Let's speak first about the pressure which unfortunately my country needs right now. Western and American officials attending the celebrations in Moscow should not behave as guests constrained by the laws of hospitality.

A standard attitude of Americans toward Russia is now often expressed as "friend of Boris." My friend Boris. If all the conversations with friend Boris become just expressions of friendship and support, then the policy will probably lead to a dead end both for Russia and for the West.

I think it is obvious that President Yeltsin understands that the uncertainty of many Western leaders about coming to Moscow was an expression of disagreement with or opposition toward his policies, toward his internal policies. President Yeltsin needs to understand that the fact that the Western leaders are coming to Moscow is due to the wish to honor the Russians who died in World War II and is not an expression of support for Russian policies in the Northern Caucasus where Russian troops are performing acts similar to ones performed by Germans in World War II.

All of us who are involved in defense of human rights often assert that we will never apply a double standard. I think that should be true also in this case. We should not apply a double standard to Russian actions. We should clearly express our attitude toward such actions just as if they were committed by a country other than Russia.

Mr. SMITH. On the issue of a double standard, would it be your view that a war crimes tribunal would be appropriate to investigate and prosecute those who have committed heinous acts in Chechnya? Akin to the one that has been constituted for Bosnia?

Mr. KOVALEV. I think that all suspected criminal acts should be investigated. If sufficient grounds exist, those responsible should be tried by a court. Law is one of the best things created by humanity, and I do not see any reason why what is happening in Chechnya should be excluded from consideration by the courts.

Unfortunately, I am doubtful that my country would be able to impartially investigate these matters or that it would agree to the creation of an international tribunal for investigation of these cases. But, demands for such international tribunals are probably appropriate. Also, the public organizations will probably investigate and issue findings on the events in Chechnya. This is appropriate and can serve as a good lesson to those involved in these crimes.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Hoyer.

Mr. HOYER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Kovalev, as you heard, I was in Copenhagen recently. We considered a resolution there referencing the Duma-passed legislation or resolution which we understood was an expression of opposition to further expenditure-supporting armed action in Chechnya. Is it correct that such a resolution or statute passed the Duma?

Mr. KOVALEV. I have not heard of such a resolution by the Duma. It's possible that it happened after my departure from Moscow which was ten days ago.

In late January and early February, attempts by some members of the Duma, including the faction to which I belong, to pass a similar resolution restricting budget expenditures for military action in Chechnya were unsuccessful.

Mr. HOYER. They have not passed?

Mr. KOVALEV. They did not pass. In late January and early February there were attempts to introduce such resolutions by several members, including members of Russia's Choice, my faction.

At the end of March, however, the Duma first passed a law about ending military action in Chechnya. But the law has not yet passed all the legislative steps necessary for its final adoption.

Mr. HOYER. I understand. That has passed the Duma and is now in the upper house.

Mr. KOVALEV. Yes. It is being considered in the Council of the Federation right now, and after that it has to be signed by the President.

Mr. HOYER. Now, does that indicate that there is majority support for bringing to a close the military action in Chechnya? In the Duma?

Mr. KOVALEV. Yes. The draft law has obtained the necessary majority.

Mr. HOYER. So I might better understand where we are in Russia, let us assume that the constitutional requirements are met. In other words, the legislative process (which you stated, and I understand, is still ongoing) is concluded; the bill passes. Will the government of Mr. Yeltsin be compelled to bring the armed conflict to a close?

Mr. KOVALEV. Yes. The President does have the power of the veto but if the Duma overrides that veto, which is possible, then the law has legal force.

Mr. HOYER. So the President would not be able to, by decree, continue the armed conflict against the Chechen people?

Mr. KOVALEV. No, he will not be able to continue the military action by decree. Also, I should mention that the upper chamber of the Federal Assembly, the Council of the Federation, has initiated a case against actions of the government in Chechnya in the Constitutional Court.

Mr. HOYER. Let me move to another perspective.

The human rights violations on which you've reported. Let me refer specifically to your report that Russian forces slaughtered hundreds in Samashky. Now, it's my understanding that a Duma commission investigated this incident along with a broader investigation of Chechnya and denies that. I also understand that the Chairman of that commission has criticized you and, in effect, talked of suing you. I'm not sure what he would sue you for, but would you care to comment on that? Is there in the Duma, or in

the government, a denial of what the Russian people are seeing on television?

Mr. KOVALEV. It is very difficult for me to comment on the position of Mr. Govorukhin, the chairman of the Duma commission. I want to emphasize that the opinions that he has expressed in his statement to the Duma are not the expressions or opinions of the commission. We were denounced by some members of the commission that he is chairman of. And it's probable that the events that have taken place in Samashky will have to be investigated by the whole commission in order for the members of the Commission to be able to agree on something. For myself, I am absolutely convinced of the reality of the information published by our group.

I have seen with my own eyes the burned-out and destroyed houses. Our group has counted such houses. It's not 50 as Mr. Govorukhin says, it is closer to 400. To be precise we have a list of 374 destroyed homes. And we have every reason to believe that that list is not yet complete. We have carefully recorded an enormous amount of evidence from witnesses. We also have in our possession a list of people killed in Samashky, but this list is also not complete. I think that any serious investigation by judicial authorities will easily be able to get to the truth. I do not see any anti-state criminal content in the activities of our group in trying to investigate and collect information and make it public. On the contrary, I believe that attempts to hide the truth are serious anti-state activities. And they contradict the true interests of Russia.

As to the position of Mr. Govorukhin, I think it would be appropriate to offer some psychological commentary here because his opinions are a good example of what I refer to in my statement as "quasi-totalitarian statism." His opinions basically are that in order to protect our motherland against its enemies it is all right to lie. It is an old point of view, very well known to us for seventy years. Guided by this wisdom, we have lied to the world.

Mr. HOYER. Thank you very much. I yield, Mr. Chairman, to Mr. Wolf.

Mr. WOLF. Thank you, Mr. Hoyer. I have no statement at this time. I'm pleased to have the opportunity to hear our honored witnesses and may have some questions later.

Mr. SMITH. Let me just ask a couple of concluding questions, Mr. Kovalev. You indicated earlier that the demands for a war crimes tribunal are appropriate. Is it, in your opinion, something that would be appropriate? That such an investigatory commission be established with the ability to prosecute those who commit such crimes?

Mr. KOVALEV. Yes, I do believe that the demands to organize an international tribunal for an investigation of actions in Chechnya are appropriate and justified. After all, in 1991 Russia was one of the initiators of a new concept—that violations of human rights cannot be considered an internal matter for any country.

Mr. SMITH. Dr. Bonner did you care to comment?

Dr. BONNER. I am very concerned that if international and public organizations focus on creating such international tribunals these actions will detract from the attention needed for the establishment of a peace process in Chechnya and for the saving of the lives of those who can still be saved there. Already, now, there are con-

cerns about the beginning by the OSCE Commission of its activities in Chechnya. Because the OSCE Commission has indicated that they will participate in the organization of the future elections in Chechnya, but at the same time has given no indications that they would press for the conditions that would allow Dudaev and his supporters to also participate in the elections.

Mr. SMITH. Would it be your testimony that the six-member OSCE Commission is likely to make a meaningful contribution to resolving the conflict?

Mr. KOVALEV. They ought to make a significant contribution to the peace process, although whether they are able to do so is hard for me to judge. I have had many occasions to meet with OSCE missions and with that group. The members of the missions are very attentive listeners. But, they always end such discussions with the words, "Well, we are just guests here." They feel that they are guests, that they have to be polite, and that they have to be careful because if they are not polite they will not be allowed to come any more. This constant conversation about politeness has led me in one instance to answer the customary question, "What should we do?" with "Why don't you visit the Bolshoi Theatre or circus? Whatever it is that guests in Moscow are supposed to do." I think that guests probably shouldn't visit Chechnya.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Kovalev, Dr. Bonner, and Alexey Semyonov, son of Dr. Bonner, who did the translating for us, I want to thank you for your very, very moving testimony and the contribution that you have made in the past, today, and that you will continue to make to the cause of human rights and bringing justice to troubled peoples.

I thank you so very, very much, and I know this Commission is very grateful.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, I want to join you. I said at the outset that the world is fortunate to have some extraordinarily courageous individuals who, under trying circumstances, difficult circumstances, in some cases obviously freedom-threatening and dangerous circumstances, have continued to raise the issues of human rights and the commitments that the international communities made, whether in United Nations Acts or the Helsinki Final Act, or other documents of a similar nature. It is an honor to have both of you with us, as I've had the opportunity of visiting with you in your own country. It is a country of great promise, but it will only meet that promise through the likes of yourselves and the leadership that you give it.

Thank you very much.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much.

While they're making their way to the witness table, Yevgenia Albats is a columnist for *Izvestiya*. She's a Russian journalist, investigative reporter, feature writer, and analyst with sixteen years of experience with Russian and foreign media. Ms. Albats gained prominence after she joined *Moscow News* in 1987 and published a series of articles on the KGB, both the organization's history as well as its activities at that time. She's the author of the book, *A State Within the State: KGB, and Its Hold On Russia, Past, Present And Future*. Her latest book is *The Jewish Question* on the prob-

lems of state anti-Semitism in the former Soviet Union and present day Russia.

Dr. Ariel Cohen is a prominent authority in the area of Russian, and former Soviet, politics, economics, and law in Washington, DC. A permanent commentator with Voice of America, Radio Liberty, and Radio Free Europe and the *Washington Times*, he has appeared on CNN, NBC, the BBC, and PRCBN and other TV and radio networks around the world. Dr. Cohen consults U.S. Government officials and business leaders, has published numerous articles dealing with U.S.-Russian relations with the new independent states and transition to market oriented democracy. He is the author of the book *Russian Imperialism: Development and Decline*.

I want to welcome our distinguished witnesses to our panel today. Ms. Albats—

Ms. ALBATS. Thank you.

Dear Mr. Chairman, dear honorable members of the Commission, dear Representatives. First of all, I am very grateful to Congressman Smith and other members of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe for inviting me to testify in the Commission's hearing on the situation in Chechnya. I am grateful to your concern about the situation in a far-away land, in my country, in Russia.

I am Yevgenia Albats, a Russian investigative journalist with eighteen years experience with foreign and Russian matters, and in January of this year I was in Grozny, in Chechnya, in the war. And I'm going to tell you what I saw there with my own eyes.

For one who was in the war in Chechnya, some things are difficult to forget.

It is difficult to forget the 7-year-old boy whose legs had been cut off by shell splinters. Along with his mom and other civilians he stood in line to get water from a water tank. The shell hit the queue directly. Nine civilians were wounded, this boy among them. Five were killed. I was 200 meters from this queue.

It is difficult to forget the blind tenants who lived under constant bombardment in the apartment building across from the Blind People Society. On the street on the 8th of March in Grozny. There was no water, no electricity, almost no food and heat in those apartments. Most of the time those blind tenants were living under their beds. When I interviewed them they kept asking me: "Why did the authorities never tell us that they were going to bomb the city?" "Why did Yeltsin lie to us, saying that there would be no bombardment of the city?" "Why did no one take us out of here?"

It is impossible to forget the story of Azamat Paragulgov, the one who managed to escape from the so-called Russian "filtration" point in Mozdok. Mozdok is a city in the Republic of North Ossetia, where the Russian military headquarters are. Such "filtration" points were established in different places in Chechnya and nearby Republic of North Ossetia to check whether the males who were captured in Grozny and other Chechen towns and villages are soldiers or civilians. According to Paragulgov, some of the prisoners of war were taken to this "filtration" camp in Mozdok on Urals military trucks. The Russian soldiers made the people lie down on the floor of the truck bed and then forced others to lie on top of them, layer upon layer. By the time they reached the destination, those

at the bottom had suffocated. Paragulgov himself saw 5 people thrown dead out of the truck. According to other people who went through other "filtration" points or camps, all of them were subject to torture. The fingers of one man I spoke to, from the village of Shali, were cut off with a bayonet. Another person had his kidneys ruptured and fingers smashed.

Finally, it is impossible to forget the city of Grozny. There is no such city any more. There isn't a single house in Grozny that hasn't been destroyed one way or another by the war. "It looks like Stalingrad," say those veterans who remember the times of World War II. All types of ammunition and ordinance, including those with volley fire, were used in the city without any consideration of the fact that thousands and thousands of civilians—mostly women, elderly, children—were hiding in the apartments and basements. I saw in those basements a mother with a month-old kid, and there were almost no males among those who were hiding in the basements. There were from twenty to eighty thousand civilians who were trying to save their lives from this constant bombardment of the Russian troops. According to the non-government sources, twenty-five thousand civilians were killed in Grozny alone. Five thousand of them were children.

Now, who are the people to have taken up arms against the Russian troops in Chechnya? Who are people who are referred to as "Dudaev's bandits" by the Russian authorities? I met a lot of them on the roads of the warring Chechnya. They are not bandits. They are ordinary citizens who have stood up for their land, their houses, their families. I will quote several of them. For the sake of their future, in case they are still alive, I will use only their first names and save their last names.

I met Magomed, 44, in the village of Samashky that recently was turned into a bloodbath by the Russian troops. Magomed was a construction worker in Russia before the war and returned to Chechnya with his family after the war broke up. Magomed sold a cow and bought a submachine gun.

In Grozny I saw a sniper, a Chechen girl about twenty, dressed in a red skirt. She had an AK automatic rifle in her hands. She joined a guerrilla unit after a shell hit her house and killed her entire family: mother, father, brother, sisters, grandfather.

This eleven-year-old boy I met in the village of Samashky. I will pass these photos after my testimony. He took up his gun in order to protect his family after his dad got killed.

In the suburb of Grozny, I met with Kazbek, who used to be the president of a production firm before the war. Kazbek mustered his small detachment after the village where he had brought his family was bombed. He told me, "I myself carried a woman whose legs had been torn off, but she had a baby to take care of. Can I afford not to fight after this?" Kazbek assured me, "There is not a single bandit in my detachment, I swear on my children. I swear on my kid." That's what I tell you I saw through my own eyes.

Thus, Russian authorities—I would like to emphasize not Russia as a country, not Russians as a people, but Russian authorities—are conducting the war against the Chechen people, not against bandits. They are implementing what they call "constitutional order" in the most brutal, bloody and violent manner. They are try-

ing to impose what they understand as a "rule of law" through conducting the war of extermination, through the pure punitive actions against the Chechen people.

Publicly-stated causes of the war in Chechnya are numerous. Some say that Yeltsin wanted to stir patriotic sentiments among Russians and so raise his rating, a gambit which backfired. Others say that Federal authorities wanted to send a message to other territories of the Russian federation that pretensions to statehood such as Chechnya had demonstrated wouldn't be tolerated. Still others point to corruption in Russia's power structures, the military included, and the fight over Chechen oil between Mafia clans both in Chechnya and in Moscow.

I should say that I specially investigated the Chechen oil theory, and I should say that it's not the case. It wasn't Russian economic interests that led to the war in Chechnya.

Unfortunately, the war in Chechnya pushed aside a corner of the curtain that obscured the real power struggle for control of Russia itself. The Chechen crisis is not the crisis in Chechnya—it's the crisis in Moscow. Unfortunately, it's not liberals but the most hardline forces, those from the military-industrial complex and the former KGB, who celebrate the victory in the power struggle now. One of the top Yeltsin advisors who was interviewed on the condition of anonymity was asked, "Who is more powerful in Russia now, the civilian or the military authorities?" His answer was, "It goes without saying—military."

The true goal of the war in Chechnya was to send a clear-cut message to the entire Russian population: "The time for talking about democracy in Russia is up. It is time to introduce order into the country, and we will do it whatever it costs".

Unfortunately, the bloodbath in Chechnya, the violations of human rights there, the mass casualties among the civilian population—they don't seem to bother the leaders of Western democracies. After all, as long as Yeltsin says he is not going to stop the reforms in Russia, why bother if Russian troops keep killing people in Chechnya? Why care if Russian missiles are not targeted at the United States so far? Why not give Russia the \$6 billion IMF loan it seeks? They will build new tanks, new rockets, and new shells to replace those lost in Chechnya, and will keep establishing "constitutional order" and "democracy", the way they understand it, with the help of those tanks. Sometimes it seems that all the leaders of the Western democracies care about is the state of Yeltsin's health. Amazingly enough, the West keeps making the same mistakes year after year. It keeps looking at the events in Russia through the prism of personalities. "Good Gorbachev-bad Gorbachev," "Courageous Yeltsin, even if not so charismatic as Gorbachev, less admirable Yeltsin, but still good." However, while the West has focused on personalities, viewing Yeltsin as a champion of democracy and free markets who must be supported at all costs, the power structures and political institutions of the former Soviet Union have regrouped and are exercising their influence over the sick President. Who is running Russia now?

Hannah Arendt, the famous American political philosopher, used to say that nothing is more dangerous for any country than when it starts to be run by "nobody," by unseen faces, unidentified per-

sons, who represent nobody and are under nobody's control. Right now Russia is run by such "nobodies" who have come from the old Soviet Union's political institutions and are ready to put the country over the edge even though not necessarily under the Red banner. As the group of Russian scientists claim in their open letter, "The Chechen crisis is not accidental. It reveals the criminal essence of the political regime that is being born in Russia. The most dangerous aspect of the present situation is the absence of the clear appreciation of this fact by the West."

The roots of the Chechen crisis go all the way back to September and October 1993 when Yeltsin dismissed Russian parliament, violated the law and the Constitution, and ended up with a mini-civil war in Moscow. It was the turning point at which Russian authorities first chose to resolve a political crisis with tanks and bloodshed, when they reestablished the Soviet Union's ill-idea of priority of force over the law, and ruined any hopes that Russia could be run by the rule of law. They crossed the line, and they got the message from the West—they will be excused for doing that, as long as they keep economic reforms going. But that view seems to be both ill-conceived and shortsighted. History teaches us that the free market economy is by no means a guarantee of democracy. It may just as easily lead to the establishment of the harshest regimes.

I am afraid that President Clinton's visit to Moscow to participate in the Victory Day's 50th anniversary celebration on May 9 will be seen by many in Russia as another message of the kind mentioned above. Yes, the decision to go to Moscow has an excuse. The Victory Day in Russia is the mourning day for 29 million Soviet people killed during World War II. Being the daughter of those who fought during that war against fascism, I appreciate Mr. Clinton's willingness to commemorate those who never saw victory. However, I do think that the leaders of Western democracies in general, and Washington in particular, should make it clear that their respect to those killed 50 years ago, and to Russia as a country, which carried out the main burden of the last war with fascism, in no way means that Western democracies are ready to justify the regime that is so quick to go ahead—to conduct the war in Chechnya and to go ahead with mass killings and violations of human rights in Chechnya. I do understand also that Washington is trying to bargain with Moscow over the nuclear deal between Russia and Iran. For that Washington gave up Chechnya. Unfortunately that bargaining is shortsighted also, since those in Moscow who are ready to sign an agreement with Iran to sell the latter equipment to enrich uranium are the same people, the same political forces, which have gotten Russia involved in the bloody war on its own territory. Thus the West should understand that the only way to stop those political forces in Russia that are ready to push the country over the edge is to exert international pressure on Russian authorities, to make it clear that the violation of human rights is not an internal Russian affair.

Thank you very much.

Mr. SMITH. Ms. Albats, thank you for that very comprehensive statement, very forcefully delivered.

Ms. ALBATS. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. I think it will be very helpful to this Commission, and hopefully the administration will take heed as well. And your harkening back to the events when Yeltsin fired upon the Parliament as perhaps the watershed indicator of what was to follow, I think was very insightful on your part. My sense of what you are saying is that we are terribly naive in the West. Either that or we're just willing to look the other way when terrible atrocities occur. I do thank you for that very fine statement.

Dr. Cohen?

Ms. ALBATS. Thank you.

Dr. COHEN. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, ladies, and gentlemen, it's a great honor to appear before your Commission at this crucial juncture in Russian-American relations. This Commission, Mr. Chairman, performed superbly in focusing on Chechnya. I want especially to thank the Commission staff, in particular Mr. Finerty and Dr. Ochs, for their efforts and expertise. I will submit my full statement and would be glad to answer any questions.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Dr. Cohen, and without objection your full statement will be made a part of the record.

I would just like to ask Ms. Albats: you've testified that the Russian Security Service played a major role in organizing the Chechen operation, and as we all know, the Russian Parliament has approved the Yeltsin administration's move to increase by law the authority of the internal security apparatus. You pointed out earlier that a message is being sent, and that it's not accidental that these things are happening. Are we seeing an incremental—or perhaps not incremental, maybe a very fast—move toward a totalitarian government again in Russia?

Ms. ALBATS. Thank you very much for your question. Right now Russia is facing the tragic choice between chaos and totalitarianism. Unfortunately, I think that everything already happened in Russia. And those people who have no liberal or democratic ideas about the country? They are in power right now. Even President Yeltsin is still the president of the country.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Kovalev said earlier that it would be justified and appropriate if an international tribunal were to investigate and perhaps prosecute those who have committed these heinous crimes. Notwithstanding the problems in getting such tribunals configured when Russia obviously has a vote on the Security Council, is it your view as well? Should something like that be attempted? Dr. Cohen, you might want to comment on this also.

Ms. ALBATS. Yes, I think yes. Another question I have is whether Russian authorities will allow [such a tribunal] to conduct normal investigations in Chechnya, but in this case there are plenty of journalists, and Russian journalists who are ready to do this job.

Mr. SMITH. Dr. Cohen.

Dr. COHEN. If I may, Mr. Chairman, I think at this point in time this is something that President Clinton can hold—if you wish—above Yeltsin's head as a possibility. It is probably something that we should consider—and consider all the implications of such a step. It will be a very strong move that might upset the whole applecart. I'm not sure, as of now, whether this time has arrived or not.

Mr. SMITH. There was considerable, and I think persuasive, argument that, however unwittingly, the United States may have given the green light during the early days of the Chechen crisis when analogies were made to the United States Civil War, when our U.S. State Department parroted the internal affair jargon that was being used by the Russians themselves. One, do you believe that we gave the green light by not speaking out forcibly and boldly?

Second, I'm concerned that, as Dr. Cohen pointed out, no single act or series of acts that may be committed by the Russians will derail the cooperation between the two countries, including the proposed sale to Iran of a reactor and of course the human rights atrocities in Chechnya. What do you make of that? If that isn't a green light, I don't know what is. In terms of behavior, is it not important? We may issue rhetorical denunciations but where does the rubber meet the road with regards to policy, linkage to loans, and foreign aid? And what do you think the Congress ought to do with regard to foreign aid reauthorizations just around the corner?

Dr. Cohen and then you.

Dr. COHEN. I agree with you, Mr. Chairman, that there is a weakness of the official statements by the State Department officials, by the President himself and by the Secretary of State. That weakness indicated to the Russian side that we might be paying just lip service to the human rights aspects and to the level of violence. I think very few people will disagree that Russia can take measures to preserve its national integrity—the integrity of the Russian state. What a lot of people are objecting to is the level of violence, the number of casualties, the indiscriminate use of the military force, and in that respect we are very much in sync with the representatives of the democratic and reformist community in Moscow as evidenced by Mr. Kovalev and Madam Sakharov's testimony here.

For about a month and a half the United States repeated that this was the internal affair. And nothing happened after the Kozyrev-Christopher meeting in Geneva on the 16th and 17th of January of this year. At that point the European leadership, the leaders of France, Germany, and other European countries, stopped their denunciations, or at least watered them down considerably. The way I put it is they looked and didn't see the United States standing behind them and supporting them, at which point the whole thing fizzled out.

I think after the warnings to Moscow on this issue and seeing that nothing is happening, the United States should have taken more substantive steps in sending a very strong signal. I can name at least a couple:

The U.S. position on the approval of the IMF loans, \$6.8 billion or \$6.6 billion, out of which twenty percent comes from the U.S. taxpayers pocket. The U.S. position was in favor of approval of those loans. At least, Mr. Chairman, this approval could have been conditional, based upon the settlement of the Chechnya affair, as well as the issue of the nuclear reactors. Nothing of the kind happened. We have in the pipeline right now over \$1.3 billion of the loans of the World Bank going to the state-run industries of the Russian Federation. This is not the private sector's assistance, this

is not bilateral, this is World Bank loans going to the notoriously corrupt Yeltsin government.

We also have \$2.3 billion of the EXIM Bank credits. I do not understand why the credits are given to American businesses unquestionably. And finally we have several hundreds of millions of dollars in the bilateral assistance for fiscal year 1996.

All of that represents a pretty hefty pipeline there, and the Administration insists that the United States will not make use of the assistance programs to send a message to the Yeltsin Administration, thinking probably that an alternative to Boris Yeltsin in Moscow could be much worse. This is a valid concern but, on the other hand, the parallel with the green light to a drunken driver, if you wish, is obvious.

Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Ms. Albats.

Ms. ALBATS. Yes. If I may, I would say that the green light for the Chechnya affair was given much earlier. It was given in September–October of 1993, when, as I said already, Mr. Yeltsin got the OK from Washington when he abandoned the Russian Parliament and violated the law and constitution. That was the turning point. Chechnya is the logical outcome of those events of 1993.

Speaking about the Iran deal, I think there is a lack of understanding that those in Russia—in Moscow—who are in favor of the deal between Russia and Iran are the hard line forces. They were, and still are, in favor of the war in Chechnya. And so by trying to stop Russians from selling reactors and enriched equipment to Iran—as I see it, that’s the reason why Yeltsin officials stopped speaking about the violation of human rights in Chechnya.

And then they made a great mistake. They just assured the hard line forces in Moscow that whatever they would do would be excused by Washington and the leaders of other Western democracies so long as they keep saying that they’re in favor of the free market economy and economic reforms in Russia.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Hoyer.

Mr. HOYER. We focused on this policy, obviously, as it is a window on the present situation and what got us there. I’m interested, Ms. Albats, in your thoughts—I think most of us have mixed emotions about what was happening in 1993, particularly those of us who’d had the opportunity to meet Khasbulatov and Rutskoi and others. Was your view then or is it now that the policies the Parliament was pursuing would have been worked out within a democratic framework?

Ms. ALBATS. Thank you very much for your question. I have the same opinion now that I expressed back in 1993: It’s extremely important for Russia to obey the law. We are the country that has no customs, no traditions for the rule of law. Thus, Mr. Yeltsin’s decree on September 21, 1993, was an attempt to find the quick exit from the political crisis. I do think, and I know that all of those who were in inner Yeltsin circles and his top advisors, they tried to convince Mr. Yeltsin not to sign the decree. There was the possibility to get out of the crisis with the Russian Parliament without the civil war in Moscow. Let us look more closely at the outcomes of this decision to abandon the Russian Parliament.

First, Russian citizens lost any hope that rule-of-law is at all possible in Russia. Since it's so easy to violate the law and constitution, and if Western democracies say "That's OK as far as you don't, you know, shoot at us," they got a clear-cut message that Russia is not the country that should or will be run by the rule-of-law.

Second, let's look on the results of the elections. As the result of the September–October events of 1993 in Russia, 13 million Russians voted for Zhirinovskiy. As a result of this, Mr. Yeltsin had to change his domestic policy. As a result of that, the most hardline forces came into Mr. Yeltsin's inner circle. And as a result of that we have Chechnya.

To make a long story short—was there the possibility to deal with Khasbulatov and the former Russian parliament without the violations of law? Of course, yes, there was this possibility. Mr. Yeltsin didn't want to use it, and I think he didn't want to use this peaceful resolution for his own purposes.

Thank you.

Mr. HOYER. Doctor, if I may follow up with that. You heard Mr. Kovalev discuss the proposed statute that passed the Duma and is now going through the legislative process. I asked him if that proposed statute passed, would it force the government to cease and desist? Mr. Kovalev said, to my surprise, that he thought the government would comply with such a statute. Do you share that view?

Ms. ALBATS. No. I'm not sure. I was in Chechnya at the time when Mr. Chernomyrdin, the Prime Minister of the country, assigned two Russian generals, Rokhlin and Vassilev, to conduct peaceful negotiations in Chechnya—with Chechen Minister of Finance Bubakarov and Attorney General of the Chechen Republic Miyev. I witnessed how Pavel Grachev, the Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation, basically stopped any negotiations, and the possibility of this ceasefire was terminated. I spoke to the top Russian authorities from Chechnya after I returned from Grozny, and I saw how the agreement was violated by the Russian troops. I asked them, you know, what's going on? And they were unable to answer, but Pavel Grachev said, "There will be no negotiations. Chechens are supposed to give up their arms."

So that's the example that generals are not under the civilian control any more in Russia.

Mr. HOYER. Thank you. Dr. Cohen.

Dr. COHEN. I would respectfully disagree with Ms. Albats on the fact that the events of September–October 1993 necessarily created or caused Chechnya. Again, the issue of Western involvement in those events is crucial. *The Western approval or Western tolerance of those events should have been phrased in such a language that it was made very clear to the Yeltsin administration that the West is prepared to tolerate that much but no more. I think in that case we might have escaped Chechnya, we might have escaped a very assertive Russian policy that we're witnessing today in the new independent States of the former Soviet Union. I'm afraid, from my reading of the situation, that the Clinton Administration did not distinguish between these nuances. It did not say "we accept and*

understand what you did because of a, b, c, but, in the future we are not prepared to tolerate other violations of law.”

If I may, I just want to point out one grave consequence of the Chechnya operation. That is the creation of the 58th army in Northern Caucasus, a violation of the CFE Treaty, together with Andrei Kozyrev's three consecutive statements on the protection of a new ethnic group—the so-called Russian Speakers (not ethnic Russians but a newly invented national group). The creation of the 58th army indicates that Moscow might be planning a broader operations in the Caucuses and elsewhere in the territory of the former Soviet Union. It could be Crimea, it could be northern Kazakhstan. This is very worrisome, especially if this does not go up on the priority list of the Clinton's party to Moscow, and again, I'm afraid that this is not on the priority list of the Clinton entourage.

Thank you.

Mr. HOYER. Thank you, Doctor, Ms. Albats. Unfortunately, I have to leave. The Chairman will be here for—

Ms. ALBATS. Thank you.

Mr. HOYER [continuing]. A little bit longer. I appreciate your taking the time.

I want to say, Mr. Chairman, that I understand what you and Dr. Cohen have said, and I have not responded. There are obviously nuances. Clearly, it is difficult to respond as forcefully in every instance; clearly, there is the perception that we may have responded inappropriately through our Ambassador to Saddam Hussein, as it related to the Kuwaiti-Iraq border. But in any event, the focus, it seems to me, is on the failure of the Yeltsin Administration to either follow through on what it said it was going to do or, perhaps, to be in control, which is very dangerous as well. Clearly, I think we all agree that the Administration, having made the decision to go to Moscow, needs to send very strong messages to the Yeltsin government when there.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Ms. ALBATS. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you Mr. Hoyer.

I'd just like to ask both additional questions.

Ms. Albats, how would you characterize freedom of the press today in Russia? Has there been any ratcheting up of pressure on those journalists who would cover in an unfettered way what's going on in Chechnya?

Ms. ALBATS. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I call it the veil of the freedom of press. First of all, there are five channels on Russian TV, and three of them are news channels. Two are under severe government pressure, and basically censorship was introduced—you know—the first days after Russian troops got to Chechnya.

Speaking about the printed press, it is under everyday pressure, from the side of the Russian authorities, and it's not necessarily the pressure of the telephone calls from the top Russian officials, but it is the economic pressure. In January, prices for the printing facilities and paper increased drastically, and eventually every independent newspaper that doesn't get government subsidies

found itself almost in bankruptcy. That was the payment the printed press paid for its opposition to the events in Chechnya.

Unfortunately, we were able to see how the position of some newspapers and of at least two networks changed after they experienced a severe pressure from the side of the Administration.

But, the most dangerous message that we got out of our coverage of the war in Chechnya is that Moscow authorities don't pay lip service to what we write. There is no fourth estate in my country, unfortunately. We have no power there, not a thread, since—I believe they feel that they are going to stay in the Kremlin forever. It reminds me a lot about the old days back in seventies and early eighties.

Mr. SMITH. Dr. Cohen, would you want to comment on that? Thank you.

Dr. COHEN. Mr. Chairman, I am glad I have this opportunity to address this issue. There was an interesting study by a veteran analyst, Julia Wishnevsky, that pointed out that the Yeltsin administration does succeed to control electronic media, especially central TV. It is also interesting what kind of people the Yeltsin Administration appoints to lead these institutions.

In late 1993, a former *Pravda* journalist, Boris Mironov was appointed chairman of the State Committee on Press. Before he was fired in the fall of 1994, Mironov funneled huge subsidies to hard line ultra-nationalist newspapers. After being fired, he said, "If to be a Russian nationalist means to be a fascist, then I am a fascist."

Other people include the recently appointed Sergei Blagovolin, who worked under Alexander Yakovlev, when Yakovlev was a director of IMEMO, the large Soviet think-tank, under the Central Committee of the communist party that Yakovlev headed. Mr. Blagovolin was a chairman of the communist party committee at IMEMO. He doesn't have any media background to speak of, and he basically was a party apparatchik at this Moscow think-tank. Now he is appointed to head the Ostankino TV Company after the Director General of Ostankino was murdered gangland style in the entrance of his building—Mr. Vlad Listyev, who was murdered on the first of March. Before that, Dimitri Kholodov, who investigated high level corruption in the Soviet army—the Russian armed forces—also was killed, which looked very much like a professional job. He received a briefcase that exploded in his face and killed him.

On the other hand, Mr. Chairman, in view of some recent events this was not an exception. After Oklahoma, I'm afraid, these kinds of activities are not limited to Russia any more, to my great dismay. Basically, the Russian media is under very strong pressure along the lines of economic control that Ms. Albats alluded to. In some cases when the Russian journalists investigate something that really bothers very powerful people, they risk their lives. In addition to Vlad Listyev, Mr. Kholodov and others that—whose names I didn't mention, there were murders of Russian journalists in the last couple of years, including journalists who were killed in Chechnya.

Mr. SMITH. Let me just ask one final question, with regards to the deployment of the six-member OSCE delegation to Chechnya. You know, if we've learned nothing else from Bosnia, it's that hope

springs eternal but, over and over again when cease-fires, when deployments of U.N. peacekeepers were sent out, that it turned out to be somewhat of a bitter experience in terms of perpetuating or providing even, some would argue, a protection for those who would commit those crimes in Bosnia.

I know there's some hope that this mission may play a part, hopefully a pivotal part, in promoting peace in Chechnya, but, I would be interested in knowing what your assessment of the OSCE process in Chechnya—particularly as it relates to the group that has been sent or will be sent.

Ms. ALBATS. Yeah. Thank you.

I'm not sure that the delegation of OSCE, the way it used to behave before, will be able to gather unbiased information from both sides. I'm afraid that once again the delegation of OSCE will try to rely on the Russian military as it did two or three months before, and they will see what they will be allowed to see. Thus, I am afraid that it will be pretty difficult to rely on the information that this delegation will be able to get in Chechnya.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you. Dr. Cohen.

Dr. COHEN. There are good examples and bad examples of OSCE process. I would classify Karabakh as a good example. I would classify Abkhazia as a very weak performance; Georgia still did not restore its sovereignty over Abkhazia.

In relation to Chechnya, we have to bear in mind that people who are responsible for Chechnya—for the casualties, for poor performance of the Russian military, et cetera, are still in power in Moscow. These people did not suffer any consequences for what is the most unsuccessful Russian or Soviet military operations since the Russian-Japanese war of 1905.

Mr. Grachev, Mr. Stepashin, Mr. Yeltsin and others are—Mr. Skokov are all in their positions of power in Moscow. Therefore, realistically speaking, how much the OSCE mission can do? Well, it can propose and publicize a model for settlement, and the more coverage, the more airing such a model will receive the better off the Russians and the Chechens are going to be. So, such a model, if suggested, should receive attention and the Russian Government can be—can come under pressure from its Western counterparts to comply with the OSCE model. That's the only reasonable thing I can think of right now.

Mr. SMITH. I would like to thank our two witnesses, Ms. Albats and Dr. Cohen, for your fine testimony, and if you have any further comments you want to add for the record please send it along.

Without further ado, this hearing is concluded. Just let me remind everyone that, if you'd like to stay, there's a thirty-five minute video on Chechnya that was produced by the Sakharov Foundation which will be shown immediately after the hearing.

[The meeting is adjourned.]

[Written insertions follow.]

A P P E N D I X

Statement of Christopher H. Smith

Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

Hearing on Chechnya; The Anguish Continues

May 1, 1995

Ladies and gentlemen, honored guests, thank you for coming to this hearing. I am Congressman Chris Smith, Chairman of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. This is the third of the Commission's hearings on the subject of the crisis in Chechnya.

It is a great honor and pleasure to welcome today our colleague and respected member of the Russian Duma, *Sergei Adamovich Kovalev*. *Sergei Adamovich* is well-known to anyone who has followed the course of human rights and democratic development in Russia. A former political prisoner, *Sergei Kovalev* has been extremely critical of the Yeltsin government's policies in Chechnya, and during the first weeks of the Russian attack on Grozny, he bravely went to Grozny, so that he could tell the truth about what was happening....from where it was happening. *Congressman Frank Wolf and I met Sergei Adamovich* in Moscow in 1989, when we were on our way to the Perm labor camp for political prisoners. His insights were invaluable to us at that time. We look forward to his insights today.

Besides Sergei Kovalev, the Commission is honored to welcome today two other witnesses of exceptional knowledge and experience in Russian affairs.

Yevgeniya Albats is an investigative journalist from Moscow. She became prominent during the period of "glasnost" and "perestroika" with her penetrating exposes of the KGB, published in the *Moscow News*. As a columnist for the Moscow newspaper *Izvestiya*, she spent much of this past January in Chechnya. Ms. Albats is the author of *A State Within The State. The KGB and its Hold on Russia*.

Dr. Ariel Cohen is the Salvatori Fellow for Eastern and Central Europe at the Heritage Foundation. As an analyst specializing in Russian politics, economics, and law in Washington, D.C., Dr. Cohen is a permanent commentator with Voice of America, Radio Liberty/Radio Free Europe and *The Washington Times*. He is also the author of the forthcoming book *Russian Imperialism: Development and Decline*.

The Romans, it was said, "create a wilderness and call it peace." In Chechnya, Moscow has created rubble and called it "restoration of legal structures." Since January of this year, the Russian army, with its overwhelming troop strength and firepower, has captured Grozny and established control over most of Chechnya. In the process, the Russian army brutally reduced Grozny's former 400,000 population in half. Thousands of Russians living in the city died alongside their Chechen neighbors during the shelling and bombing of their city.

A few days ago, Russia announced suspension of military operations in Chechnya until May 15, after the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Allied victory over Nazi Germany. This is a welcome move, and we hope it will lead to a just and lasting resolution of the conflict. But it has come too late for hundreds of persons trapped by the hostilities. In late March, the Russian army launched an offensive against Chechen forces that had retreated south of Grozny, but the offensive was not limited to military targets. In the town of Samashki, for instance, Chechen, Russian and foreign witnesses have reported blood-chilling atrocities being carried out by Russian soldiers against civilians. One Russia observer described it as "nothing less than a genocide."

At this moment, a long-term mission of the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe is being established in Grozny. This mission is tasked to promote respect for human rights; to foster development of democratic institutions; to assist in holding elections; to facilitate the return of refugees and the delivery of humanitarian aid; and to work for a peaceful resolution of the crisis "in conformity with the principle of territorial integrity of the Russian Federation." The Commission intends to follow the progress of this mission very closely. U.S. tax money must not be used to subsidize some diplomatic band-aids on the wounds caused by Russia's war machine. We trust the mission will carry out its mandate faithfully and that the Russian government will provide maximum cooperation in its efforts. There must be justice for all the people of Chechnya, and those guilty of human rights violations and war crimes, regardless on which side they serve, should be brought to account.

I wish to make it clear that our criticism of Russia's policy in Chechnya is not an issue of "United States vs. Russia" but rather "humanity vs. inhumanity." We are adding our voices to that of deeply concerned Russian citizens such as Sergei Kovalev, Dr. Elena Bonner and thousands of others who are protesting their government's policy in Chechnya. The manner in which Russia resolves the Chechnya crisis may well decide its political direction into the next century. If the political and military forces that precipitated the bloody violence set the tone in Moscow for governance, then undoubtedly both the people of Russia and the entire world will suffer the baleful effects. In a few days, our President and other Western leaders will be in Moscow to help commemorate the end of one brutal chapter in Europe's past. I hope the Chechen experience will not be a harbinger of equally brutal chapters in Europe's future.

In this connection, the Commission has written to President Clinton commending him for calling upon President Yeltsin to extend indefinitely the suspension of military activities in Chechnya, and for the administration's efforts to find Frederick Cuny, the American citizen who disappeared while on a humanitarian mission in Chechnya. We have also asked the President to seek Mr. Yeltsin's full support for the OSCE mission, and for prosecution of persons implicated in war crimes in the Chechnya conflict. Copies of this letter will be available for the press and public.

I'll close by mentioning that our friends at the Sakharov Foundation have provided a videotape of the events in Chechnya for members of the Commission or audience who wish to view it after the formal part of this hearing is completed at around 4:00 p.m. The film is 35-minutes in length, in Russian. There will be someone available to interpret for interested viewers.

I'd like to offer my colleagues on the panel an opportunity to make a few comments, and then we'll invite our esteemed colleague, Sergei Kovalev, to the witness table. Following questions and answers with Mr. Kovalev, the Commission will hear from Ms. Albats and Dr. Cohen.

1 May 95

Senator Alfonse D'Amato
Opening Statement
CSCE Hearing on
"Chechnya: The Anguish Continues"

Mr. Chairman:

I want to thank you for calling this hearing on the Russian effort to defeat, by armed force, the Chechen drive for independence. The timing of this hearing is particularly important, with President Clinton about to travel to Moscow for a summit meeting with President Yeltsin. I hope we can send a message to both Presidents with this hearing.

We have before us a distinguished panel of witnesses -- Sergei Kovalev, a Member of the Russian Duma and the Human Rights Ombudsman of the Yeltsin Administration, Yevgenia Albats, a columnist with *Izvestiya*, and Dr. Ariel Cohen, Salvatori Fellow for Russian and Eurasian Studies at the Heritage Foundation. Their statements and responses to our questions should add to the record this Commission has made on this issue.

The Chechen conflict may mark another historic turning point in U.S. - Russian relations. Yet we approach this turning point casually -- because the Cold War is over, the Soviet military threat to the United States and western Europe has ended, and too many people regard this matter as insignificant.

Chechnya is significant -- it is a mass grave for at least 25,000 people, and perhaps for Russian democracy and continued good relations between Russia and the West. Russia appears to have attempted to terminate Chechnya's independence using the old methods that worked for the Czar and for Joseph Stalin.

The problem with this is that, whatever happens to Chechnya, this approach has given increasing prominence and power to those in Russia who are willing to resort to mass murder, torture, and concentration camps. It has provided an external threat around which radical Russian nationalists can rally. It has proved a stunning debacle and a glaring embarrassment for the Russian armed forces.

As anti-democratic forces in Russia use this conflict for their own purposes, and as pro-reform elements are shunted out of key power positions, President Clinton goes to Moscow. What are his plans to help reverse this situation?

I believe President Clinton should not go to Moscow now. His visit will either give hope and comfort to the neo-communist authoritarians who are increasingly prominent in Yeltsin's councils, or provoke a public split between the United States and Russia that will pour gasoline on the fire the radical Russian nationalists are trying to start. Neither of these results will advance U.S. national interests in Russia. President Clinton should stay home and provide his public

support to the cease-fire Yeltsin has declared in Chechnya.

We have many issues outstanding with Russia -- the fate of the Chechen rebellion is just one of them. Russia is refusing to cancel a deal to sell two nuclear reactors and much nuclear technology and training to Iran. Russia has not signed onto the Partnership for Peace, our effort to draw Russia into the NATO circle, and has declared itself opposed to any eastern expansion of NATO. Now, allegedly because of the Chechen conflict, Russia is in violation of its agreement to the Conventional Forces in Europe, or CFE, arms reduction treaty.

Russia had no pressing need to use military force to end Chechnya's attempted secession. Nothing had happened that forced Yeltsin's hand. Yet, when lower profile attempts to bring Chechnya to heel failed, the Russian army was sent in. It was bloodied badly in its first contacts with Chechen rebels, and resorted to overwhelming firepower as the answer to its tactical shortcomings.

Now, we have the ugly prospect of a Russian army showing little discipline and professional responsibility, defensive of its actions and of the presumably unauthorized crimes its forces committed in Chechnya, and under both international and domestic political fire for its failings. What will the army do next?

The old KGB may have been reconstituted. The change in name and responsibilities of the Federal Counterintelligence Service to the Federal Security Service, combined with the role of the security services in Chechnya and in suppressing Russian dissent against the Chechen conflict, must give us all pause. It is hard to believe that a reconstituted KGB can see anything good coming of democratic reform in Russia.

Then, we have the disappearance in Chechnya of Mr. Frederick C. Cuny, an American working for a private humanitarian aid effort. The United States has asked for Russian assistance in finding him. So far, there have been no positive results.

Also, last week the Russian authorities canceled journalist Steve LeVine's multiple entry visa and sent him back to Georgia, his place of departure, on the pretext of a CIS agreement that no CIS state would admit someone who had been expelled from another CIS state, as LeVine had been.

The lack of success in finding Mr. Cuny in Chechnya, which is apparently under the control of the Russian security services, except where active combat is occurring or where Chechen rebels remain in control, and the refusal to allow Mr. LeVine into Russia, all smack of KGB conduct under the old Soviet system.

If President Clinton goes to Moscow as planned, I hope he raises each of these matters with President Yeltsin. President Yeltsin needs to regain control of the Russian military and the Russian security services, and regain the initiative for democratic reform in Russia. If he instead follows the seductive call of authoritarianism, which has been the refuge for Russian leaders in times of turmoil, both Russia and the United States will be much the worse for it.

If President Clinton goes to Moscow, I hope he will bring strongly to President Yeltsin's attention the increasing number of agreements that Russia is breaching or endangering by its conduct in Chechnya, and by the political repercussions of its Chechnya policy. Russia must be an active participant in and supporter of any international order for it to have a chance of establishing peace and fostering freedom and prosperity for the world at large, including Russia. Chechnya has brought Russian conduct into sharp focus, displaying apparent violations of the Helsinki Accords, the OSCE Budapest Document, the Hague and Geneva Conventions, the Conventional Forces in Europe treaty, and leading to doubts about whether the Russian legislature will ratify the START II treaty. This conduct has led to questions by Russia's immediate neighbors about the probability of Russian political or military intervention in their internal affairs, possibly justified on the basis of perceived threats to or injustices against ethnic Russian residents, or on the basis of these states seeking closer ties to NATO to protect their sovereignty, which Russia will portray as a threat to its own security.

If President Yeltsin allows events to take their natural course, authoritarian interests allied with Russian organized crime may become dominant and stifle the progress of democratic reform. The rise to power of such a group would, in all probability, be seen as significantly threatening by everyone from Ukraine to the Czech Republic, resulting in serious rearmament efforts and probable abrogation, in fact if not formally, of the CFE treaty. Europe would once again become an armed camp, one in which any spark could set off another conflagration.

I don't need to remind this audience that the United States remains firm in its conventional commitment to NATO and that there is still a United States Army heavy corps garrisoned in Germany under NATO command. Instead of considering whether these forces could be further reduced or withdrawn, such adverse Russian developments might bring the need to restore U.S. force levels in Europe almost to their Cold War levels, with the attendant costs and dangers.

Rearmament by Russia's neighbors would probably doom START II. Russia would see that maintaining a substantial strategic nuclear program is vital to its interests, lacking the strategic buffer of the Warsaw Pact states and forward deployed conventional forces the Soviet Union possessed. Without START II and with major defense concerns about a belligerent, expansionist, authoritarian Russia, U.S. strategic nuclear programs and missile defense programs would require significant new funding.

In addition to mangling its international commitments, Russia's Chechen policy has led inexorably to conditions harmful to the process of democratic and free enterprise reform in Russia. Critics of the Chechen policy, which by all reports is wildly unpopular in Russia, have less and less room maneuver. Critical journalism is discouraged, and while active suppression of *public dissent is minimal, more robust dissent could well bring it on. This would mark a significant change in the atmosphere in Russia, and would lay the groundwork for more vigorous suppression of people and views that don't support Russian policy.* The cost of the Chechen campaign, while minimized in public by Russian officials, must be high. To finance this campaign, Russia is endangering the precarious economic stability that has only recently been achieved. *If the cost of the war in Chechnya causes inflation to take off again, and if the international community, repelled by Russian excesses in Chechnya, turns off the aid spigot, hyperinflation could ruin Russia's economic and political reforms in a very short time.*

Taken together, these are the table stakes where Chechnya is concerned. It is an event of major significance. It deserves much more attention than it is presently getting by the American public.

Mr. Chairman, I don't want to take up any more time that our witnesses could put to good use. I will end my remarks here, so that we may all hear what they have to say.

Thank you.

STATEMENT OF STENY H. HOYER
COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE
HEARING ON CHECHNYA
MAY 1, 1995

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I would like to commend you on holding this hearing. I'm particularly pleased to welcome Sergey Kovalev, whom I have had the pleasure and privilege to know for many years, although I regret that we meet again in these circumstances. The whole world knows of his heroic efforts and sacrifices on behalf of human rights during the Soviet era. It says much, I fear, about today's Russia that his colleagues in parliament voted in March to remove him as head of the Duma's Commission on Human Rights. As they say, "No one is a prophet in his own country." But few countries need a prophet like Sergey Kovalev more than Russia.

As has been mentioned, this is the third Helsinki Commission hearing since January on the disastrous policy hatched in Moscow to resolve by armed force the problem of relations between the government of the Russian Federation and Chechnya. The results of that decision have been devastating in human terms: scores of thousands have been killed, hundreds of thousands have been made refugees. Many of the victims have been elderly civilians with no place to flee the onslaught, which they never imagined would wear the uniform of the Russian Army.

In political terms, the consequences have been almost as lamentable. It's obvious to anyone with eyes to see that U.S. relations with Russia are deteriorating. But more troubling are the increasingly pessimistic prospects for democracy in Russia. This dreadful misadventure in Chechnya has strengthened imperialist, statist philosophies and politicians, coarsened political dialogue, and placed under a cloud the vision of a free Russia which respected human rights and observed its international commitments.

Sometimes a detail can illustrate an entire painting. Last week, Russian authorities refused a visa to an American journalist, Steve LeVine, who reported on the war in Chechnya and on political developments in Transcaucasia and Central Asia. The reason given -- or should I say pretext? -- was that Russia is obligated, according a 1992 CIS treaty, to deny a visa to anyone denied a visa by, or expelled from, another CIS country, and Mr. LeVine, a respected journalist, was expelled from Uzbekistan last year. Is this is what we've come to? Is democratic Russia, which we welcomed with such anticipation a few years ago, and on which we had placed such hopes, now on the level of repressive, authoritarian Uzbekistan when granting visas to foreign journalists who uncover and publicize what the authorities would prefer to keep hidden? In how many other ways will Russia come to resemble Uzbekistan?

At the OSCE Summit last December in Budapest, President Yeltsin said "it is still too early to bury Russian democracy." Perhaps. We all pray that's the case. But the hopes that remain are personified by Sergey Kovalev and the thousands of Russian citizens who oppose the war on Chechnya, not those who unleashed it. I look forward to hearing his testimony and that of our other distinguished witnesses.

Statement by Sergei Kovalev, Member of Russian State Duma
Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe
May 1, 1995

I will begin with a few sentences on what is happening in Chechnya, but I will not go into details which have been reported in the press.

For the last five months, Russian government forces have been conducting brutal and bloody warfare there. Tens of thousands of civilians have died in the course of the fighting, and hundreds of thousands have been turned into refugees.

Russian aircraft, artillery, and tanks have destroyed the city of Grozny which had a prewar population of 400,000.

The army is carrying out punitive expeditions against other localities. I've just returned from the Chechen village of Samashky where this kind of punitive expedition killed a hundred villagers or more and burned to the ground a great number of homes.

Hundreds of persons have been arbitrarily detained in the course of police operations that are being conducted in areas of Chechnya that have come under the control of Russian government forces. The detainees are brought to special "filtration camps" used to screen Chechens for pro-Dudaev activities or sympathies. Detainees have been beaten and sometimes tortured. There are reports of executions without trials.

From the very beginning, official government information about the events in Chechnya has been based on brazen lies. The Russian government at first disclaimed all knowledge of the tanks and aircraft that attacked Grozny last November 25 and 26, claiming that this operation was probably the responsibility of the Chechen opposition to Dudaev. Soon, however, the Russian Defense Ministry had to acknowledge that the tanks were Russian tanks manned by Russian soldiers recruited by the Russian security service and the helicopters that attacked the Grozny airport were Russian helicopters.

When I was in Grozny last December, the Russian government on two occasions claimed that bombing of Grozny had been stopped by order of President Yeltsin, even as I could hear the roar of Russian planes and the explosions that were destroying the city.

A recent example of official lying is the insistently repeated tale that a group of elders from Samashky were fired upon by Dudaev's troops, a report that served as a pretext for the punitive action against Samashky. I and my colleagues had an opportunity to meet and talk with the alleged victims of this incident, and they assured us that the report was untrue.

Why was the decision taken to begin the war in Chechnya? Was President Yeltsin's decision to use military force in Chechnya unavoidable? Could he have done something other than use force against rebels? Did the proclaimed necessity of restoring law and order in the region lead inevitably to war?

I have no sympathy for Dudaev's unilateral declaration of Chechen independence. There was much to criticize about Chechnya's human rights record during the three years it was governed by Dudaev and his administration. But for quite some time both before and after the outbreak of fighting it would have been possible to solve the problem of Chechen separatism by political means. All attempts to do so were systematically and deliberately torpedoed by the military high command and by others in the government in Moscow. With respect to the alleged aim of restoring law and order in Chechnya, I think it's sufficient to say that many actions there of the federal authorities are gross violations of the Constitution and laws of Russia.

It is important to analyze the causes of the war in Chechnya in order to avoid the occurrence of similar conflicts elsewhere, but the urgent task right now is to bring about an effective ceasefire throughout Chechnya, to end the bloodshed, and to open negotiations for a just and durable peace.

I understand that members of the U.S. Congress are concerned most of all with the effect of the Chechen crisis on Russia's domestic and foreign policies and its implications for international stability, so I will share with you my ideas on these topics.

The Chechen war, as it has been waged and is still being waged, is the external expression of the rise of a definite political tendency. It is the tendency to assert "derzhavnost" (perhaps best translated as "quasi-totalitarian statism") as the supreme value of the new Russia instead of the liberal values proclaimed by the Russian Constitution. Such statism insists that the unconstrained force of the state takes precedence over the rights and liberties of the individual.

Such statism is not the same thing as a strong and effective system of government in a rule-of-law state. Such

statism is incompatible with the rule of law, with democracy, and with human rights. Such statism is closely connected with messianic, imperialist nationalism, with anti-Western attitudes, with the militarist, authoritarian, and totalitarian traditions of our past. Such statism is in essence the restoration in Russia of the old Communist system under the flag of a new ideology.

How should democratic countries react to this? I hesitate to suggest specific positive actions, but the one thing I know for sure is how the West shouldn't react to events in Russia.

First. In no event should the West turn away from Russia and leave it to its fate. That would soon lead to Americans and the rest of the world once again having to live with a dangerous, aggressive, unpredictable neighbor. Sooner or later this totalitarian superpower will find it cramped to share one planet with free countries. Then the West will have to step in and act, but the cost will greatly surpass the cost of attention to Russia's situation now.

Second. Involvement of the West in Russia's affairs should not be reduced to unconditional support of a particular leader. Clearly, President Yeltsin is not the same thing as President Zhirinovsky. But I don't understand why this means it's necessary to support Yeltsin even in those cases when his actions are exactly the same as Zhirinovsky's would be in his place. Speaking frankly, I dare say that in trying to emulate Zhirinovsky and breaking with democracy, President Yeltsin has lost any real chance for reelection. Not that Zhirinovsky's chances are any better. For this reason alone, the choice "Yeltsin or Zhirinovsky" seems a false and unrealistic dichotomy.

Support should be given not to individuals but to concrete political steps which will help establish democracy in Russia—that is, strong, effective government under constant and direct public control. The emerging institutions of civil society which will be capable of exercising such control require serious and energetic support. But support for democratic reforms in Russia should be combined with equally serious and energetic opposition to any actions by government bodies in Russia which depart from the values of a democratic society.

Only a selective and targeted combination of support and pressure can assist that transformation of the Russian state from its historical role as the bane of the Russian people into a guarantee of their prosperity and security, from a continual threat to neighboring countries into their reliable and equal partner.

Third. The West must see in Russia not a weak and dependent client, not a defeated enemy of the Cold War years, but an equal and independent partner. In developing its Russian policy, the West, and in particular the United States, must not think that a weak and isolated Russia would be advantageous for them. This would be an extremely dangerous illusion. A weak and isolated Russia would be an explosive charge capable in the not-too-distant future of shattering not only Europe's security system, but the whole world's. Recall that the Versailles treat of 1919 was followed by the Munich Agreement of 1938. And what followed thereafter cannot be forgotten.

I realize that it is a complex and arduous task for the United States to work out a new Russian policy, free from both euphoria and hostility, balanced and rational, distinguishing national interests from national egoism. Simple prescriptions can only harm this project. But who said that the art of politics is a simple matter?

Statement by Elena Bonner

The second OSCE Commission hearings on Chechnia are taking place at the time when the President of the United States is preparing to leave for Moscow for the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the victory in W.W.II. The pomp and the grandeur with which the Russian authorities are marking this date are intended not only to honor those who perished in W.W.II or those who had walked its hard roads; - this celebrations also are intended to hide the tragedy of the Chechen people.

The coming to Moscow of the US President and of the heads of other democratic states will be justified if they *refuse to be satisfied with a temporary moratorium of military actions and vague promises - they need to press for real peace. That requires:*

- 1) The agreement by Russia to establish a complete cease-fire and to begin the negotiations with the Government of the President Dudaev; revocation by the Prosecutor General of the warrant for arrest of Dudaev.
- 2) The release of all prisoners of war and of the detainees of the "filtration" camps.
- 3) The beginning, under the international observation, of the preparations for the withdrawal of the Russian army.
- 4) A responsible promise to allow participation of Dudaev and his supporters in the future elections, otherwise elections will be just one more lie.

I appeal to the OSCE Commission to initiate a respective resolution by the US Congress addressed to the President of the United States as well as Parliaments and Governments of other democratic states. Otherwise, once the Red Square military parade and the sumptuous dinner at the Kremlin are over, and the servants have cleared the tables and drunk up the left-over champagne - the army of the Russian Federation will proceed to bring about the final solution of the Chechen issue.

More than 50 years ago the ideas of final solutions brought no benefits to the German people and have been paid for dearly by all those who stood up against the Third Reich, including Americans. It is impossible to believe that the people of the United States and you, their elected representatives will allow the same tragedy to happen today whether on the grand scale or in the small, seemingly insignificant Chechnia.

May 1st, 1995

Elena Bonner
disabled veteran of W.W.II
Lieutenant of the Medical Corps, 1941-1945

May 1, 1995

**Testimony of Yevgenia Albats ,
Russian investigative journalist,
before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe
of the United States' Congress**

For one who was in Grozny and all around the warring Chechnya ¹ certain things are difficult to forget. It is difficult to forget the seven-year old boy whose legs had been cut off by a shell-splinter: along with his mom and other civilians he stood in line to get water from a water tank. (there is no water supply in Grozny anymore). The shell hit the queue directly: nine civilians were wounded - this boy among them, five were killed. It is difficult to forget the blind tenants who lived under constant bombardment in an apartment building across from the "Blind People Society" on the street of the Eighth of March in Grozny: there was no water, no electricity, almost no food and heat in those apartments. Most of the time those blind tenants were living under their beds. They kept asking me when I came to interview them: "Why did the authorities never tell us that they were going to bomb the city?" "Why did Yelzyn lie to us as saying that there would be no bombardment of the city? Why did nobody take us out of here?"

It is impossible to forget the story of Azamat Paragulgov, the one who managed to escape from the Russian so-called "filtration point" in Mozdok. (Mozdok is the city in the Republic of North Osetya where the Russian military headquarters are.) Such "filtration points" were established in different places in Chechnya and near-by Republic of North Osetya to check whether the males, who were captured in Grozny and in other Chechen towns and villages, soldiers or civilians. According to Paragulgov some of those prisoners of war were taken to Mozdok on "Urals"

¹ The Russian Republic of Chechnya was invaded by Russian forces on December 11, 1994, three years after declaring unilateral independence. Chechnya is an oil producing enclave of 1.1 million mainly Muslim people situated between the Caucasus Mountains and southern Russia. It is bordered by republic of Ingushetia to the west, Russia's Stavropol region to the north, Dagestan to the east and Georgia to the south.

military trucks. The Russian soldiers made the people lie down on the floor of the truck bed and then forced others to lie on top of them, layer upon layer, so that by the time they reached the destination those at the bottom had suffocated. Paragulgpov himself saw five people thrown dead out of the truck. According to other people who went through other filtration points or camps, all of them were subjected to torture. The fingers of one from the village of Shali were cut off with a bayonet. Another person had his kidneys ruptured and fingers smashed.

Finally, it is impossible to forget the city of Grozny . There is no such a city anymore. There isn't a single house in Grozny that had not been destroyed in one way or another by the war. "It looks like Stalingrad",- say those veterans who remember the times of the World War Two. All types of ammunition and ordnance , including those with volley fire, were used in the city without any consideration of the fact that thousands and thousands of civilians - mostly women, elderlies, children were hiding in the apartments and basements. According to the non-government sources 25 thousand civilians were killed only in Grozny, 5 thousand of them are children.

Now, who are the people to have taken up arms against Russian troops in Chechnya ? Who are people who are called as "Dudayev's bandits" by the officials in Moscow? I met a lot of them on the roads of the warring Chechnya. They are not bandits - they are ordinary citizens who have stood up for their land, their houses, their families. I will quote several of them. For the sake of their future - in case they are still alive - I will use only their first names and save their last names I met Magomed, 44, in the village of Samashky that recently was turned into a bloodbath by the Russian troops. Magomet was a construction worker in Russia before the war and returned to Chechnya with his family after the war has been broken up. Magomed sold a cow and bought a submachine gun. He told me:" I do not care about Dudayev , what I stand up for is my land and my family." In Grozny I saw a woman sniper - a Chechen girl about twenty dressed in a red skirt

with big black dots on it, and in a military shirt over top. She had an AK automatic rifle in her hands. She joined a guerrilla unit after a shell that hit her house had killed her entire family: her mother, father, sisters and little brother. In the suburb of Grozny I met with Kazbek, 38, who used to be the president of a production firm before the war. Kazbek mastered his small detachment after the village where he had brought his family was bombed. He told me: "I myself carried a woman whose legs had been torn off, but she had a baby to take care of. Can I afford not to fight after this?" Kazbek assured me: "There is not a single bandit in my detachment -- I swear on my children."

Thus, Russian authorities-- I would like to outline: not Russia as a country, not Russians as a people, but Russian authorities-- are conducting the war against the Chechen people, but not against "bandits". They are implementing what they call "constitutional order" in the most brutal, bloody and violent manner. They are trying to impose what they understand as a "rule of law" through conducting the war of extermination, through the pure punitive actions against the Chechen people.

Publicly stated causes of the war in Chechnya are numerous. Some say that Yelzyn wanted to stir patriotic sentiments among Russians and so raise his rating; a gambit which backfired. Others say that federal authorities wanted to send a message to other territories of Russian federation that pretensions to statehood such as Chechnya had plied would not be tolerated. Still others point to corruption in Russia's power structures, the military included, and the fight over Chechen oil between Mafia clans both in Chechnya and in Moscow. The question of Chechnya oil was paid a lot of attention in the Western media. However, a close look to the problem suggests that it is not the case to speak too much about. Chechnya has proven reserves of 372mm to 438mm bls -- it is about the same as those of one of Russian oil companies. Chechen crude production drastically

went down in recent years : it was less than 1 per cent of Russian forecast total production for 1995. An oil pipeline that goes through Chechnya and connects Russian producing areas with the refining center in Baku was not the cause of the war also. Well-informed sources in two of Russia's largest integrated oil companies said that there has been already made a proposal to build a pipeline which would bypass Chechnya and cross the Russian Stavropol region to the North of Chechnya. Said: "The construction of the new pipeline would cost Russia much less than a war in Chechnya." To make the long story short, the real cause of the war in Chechnya is neither in Grozny, nor in the entire Caucasian region - it is in Moscow. The war in Chechnya pushed aside a corner of the curtain that obscured the real power struggle for control of Russia itself. Unfortunately, it is not liberal, but the most hard-line forces-- those from the Military-Industrial Complex and the former KGB-- who celebrate the victory in that power struggle now. One of the top Yelzyn advisors who was interviewed on the conditions of anonymity said in response to the question who is more powerful in Russia now: the civilian or the military authorities? : "It goes without saying - military",- was the answer. Thus, the true goal of the war in Chechnya was to send a clear-cut message to the entire Russian population:" the time for talking about the democracy in Russia is up; now it is time to introduce order into the country and we will do it whatever it cost."

Unfortunately, bloodbath in Chechnya, violations of human rights there, mass casualties among civilian population do not seem to bother too much the leaders of Western democracies. After all why bother, if Yelzyn says -- while Russian troops keep killing people in Chechnya -- that he is not going to stop the reforms in Russia? Why care if Russian missiles are not targeted at the United States so far? Why not to give Russia some \$ 6 billion through the IMF loan, they were seeking? They will build new tanks, new rockets and new shells to replace those lost in

Chechnya and will keep establishing "constitutional order" and "democracy", the way they understand it , with the help of those tanks . Sometimes, it seems , all that leaders of the Western democracies care about is the state of Yelzyn' health. Amazingly enough , the West keeps making the same mistakes year after year. It keeps looking at the events in Russia through the prism of personalities. "Good Gorbachev -- bad Gorbachev", "Courageous Yelzyn , even if not so charismatic as Gorbachev, less admirable Yelzyn, but still good." However, while the West has focused on personalities, viewing Yelzyn as a champion of democracy and free markets who must be supported at all costs, the power structures and political institutions of the former Soviet Union have regrouped and are exercising their influence over the sick President. Who is running Russia now? Hannah Arendt, the famous American political philosopher, used to say; that nothing is more dangerous for any country than when it starts to be run by "no-body", i.e., by unseen faces, unidentified persons, who represent nobody and are under nobody's control. Right now Russia is run by such "no-body" which have come from the old Soviet Union's political institutions and is ready to put the country over the edge even though not necessarily under the Red banner. As the group of Russian scientists claims in their open letter: " Chechen crisis is not accidental. It reveals the criminal essence of the political regime, that is being born in Russia. The most dangerous aspect of the present situation is the absence of the clear appreciation of this fact by the West."

The roots of the Chechen crisis go all the way back to September and October of 1993 when Yelzyn dismissed Russian parliament, violated the law and the Constitution and ended up with a mini-civil war in Moscow. It was the turning point, at which Russian authorities first chose to resolve a political crisis with tanks and bloodshed, when they reestablished the Soviet Union's ill-idea of priority of force over Law, and ruined any hopes that Russia could be run by the rule of

law. They crossed the line and they got the message from the West: they will be excused for doing that, as long as they keep economic reforms going. But that view seems to be both ill-conceived and shortsighted. History teaches us that the free market economy is by no means a guarantee for democracy, it may just as easily lead to the establishment of the harshest regimes.

I am afraid that President Clinton's visit to Moscow to participate in the Victory Day's 50th anniversary celebration on May 9 will be seen by many in Russia as another message of the kind mentioned above. Yes, the decision to go to Moscow has an excuse. The Victory day in Russia is the mourning day for 29 million Soviet people killed during the World War II. Being the daughter of those who fought the very war with fascism I appreciate Mr. Clinton's willingness to show his respect to those who never got to see the Victory day. However, I do think that the leaders of Western democracies in general, and Washington in particular should make it clear that their respect to those killed 50 years ago and to Russia as a country, which carried out the most burden of the war with fascism is in no way means that Western democracies are ready to justify the current regime that is so quick to go ahead with mass killings and violations of human rights in Chechnya. I do understand also that Washington is trying to bargain with Moscow over the nuclear deal between Russia and Iran. Unfortunately, that bargaining is shortsighted also. Those in Moscow who are ready to sign the agreement with Iran to sell the latter the equipment to enrich uranium are the same people, the same political forces, which have got Russia involved in the bloody war on its own territory. Thus, the West should understand that the only way to stop those political forces in Russia, that are ready to push the country over the edge is to exert international pressure on Russian authorities, to make it clear that the violation of human rights is not an internal Russian affair.

**Testimony Before the
Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe
U.S. Congress**

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After Chechnya: Threats to Russian Democracy and U.S.- Russian Relations

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen. It is a great honor to appear before your Commission at this crucial juncture in Russian-American relations. This Commission, Mr. Chairman, performed superbly in focusing on Chechnya. I want especially to thank the Commission staff, in particular Mr. Finerty and Dr. Ochs for their efforts and expertise.

Six months after Russian tanks rolled into Chechnya, the future of Russian democracy and free markets is under threat. The future of Russia's relations with the West and the U.S. is also in danger. The internal situation in Russia bears a direct influence upon Russia's relations with the outside world and the U.S. While the world's leaders gather in Moscow to celebrate the victory over Nazism, the Russian foreign minister is calling for the use of force to "protect" the Russian co-ethnics living outside the borders of the Russian Federation. Fifty years ago, a politician who did the same in Central Europe died in a bunker in Berlin, taking with him over fifty million victims.

Andrey Kozyrev's persistent declarations go beyond mere rhetoric. Russia is introducing its new 58th field army into the Northern Caucasus, in clear and conscious violation of the Conventional Forces Europe (CFE) Treaty, a centerpiece of post-Cold War European security. If Russia is not planning an aggressive action either against Ukraine or its trans-Caucasian neighbors, why does it need to revise upwards the CFE limitations of 164 tanks and 414 artillery systems? Why is General Lebed, a self-proclaimed restorer of the old Soviet Union and Commander of the 14th Army in Moldova, applauding Kozyrev?

The West and the U.S. are facing in Chechnya their biggest challenge since the collapse of communism.

Democracy at Risk

The inability of contemporary Russia to reinvent itself as a modern free market, democratic nation-state lies at the root of the current crisis. The dangers to the democratic development of the Russian Federation include:

Bureaucratic Empowerment and the Threat of Communist Restoration. Ten years after the beginning of Mikhail Gorbachev's *perestroika*, remnants of the communist party elite still control the levers of power in the Moscow government as well as in the provinces. They are also in charge of the vast property and natural resources of Russia. Only now this control is not only *de-facto*, but it is also *de jure*, through privatization.¹

Unsurprisingly, ordinary Russians are deeply disenchanted with the direction the reforms have taken. The majority of the population has lost interest in the political process, as evidenced by the low turnout in the most recent local and regional elections (less than 25 percent).

The Military Wild Card. The Russian military is also disenchanted with the reform process. It strongly opposes a Western-style democracy for Russia and yearns for a ruler with a "strong hand". Military troops voted heavily for ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy in December of 1993. Chechnya polarized the military between the majority of the officer corps, and a small (and resented) group of generals around Defense Minister Pavel Grachev who are seen as "unprofessional" and "self-serving". The Russian military feels defeated and nostalgic for the Soviet period, when it enjoyed high status and large budgets.

Tens of thousands of Russian soldiers have participated in killing and marauding citizens of their own country. In the 1980s, veterans of the Afghan war contributed to the swelling ranks of Russian organized crime. They also flooded the extremist nationalist movements. This could well be repeated after Chechnya, further destabilizing the feeble Russian democracy.²

Authoritarian Renaissance. The Yeltsin administration has done very little to promote the rule of law in Russia. It pushed through the 1993 Constitution establishing an "imperial" presidency, with little more than an advisory role for the Parliament.³

Today, the most influential group in the Kremlin includes Yeltsin's Chief of Bodyguards, General Alexander Korzhakov, Defense Minister Pavel Grachev, and First Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets, who is in charge of the military-industrial complex. Even Yeltsin's Chief of Staff, Sergei Filatov, has complained that the presidential staff communicates by writing notes to each other, as their phones and rooms are wire-tapped.⁴

The political role and powers of Russia's historically strong spy agencies are growing. In September of 1994, the Foreign Intelligence Service, headed by KGB veteran General Evgenii Primakov, published its own policy statement, advocating strengthened Russian domination of the whole area of the former Soviet Union, the so-called "near abroad". According to Primakov's agency, Russia must re-consolidate all the Newly Independent States under its tutelage regardless of the West's position on this issue.

As of April of this year, the Federal Counterintelligence Service, known by its Russian acronym, FSK (*Federalnaya Sluzhba Kontrrazvedki*) was renamed. It is now called the Federal Security Service (*Federalnaya Sluzhba Bezopasnosti*, or FSB). This is the successor to the Second Chief Directorate of the KGB, the internal

¹ Leonid Radzikhovskiy, "Nomenklatura obmeniala 'Kapital' na kapital". (*The Nomenklatura Has Exchanged Das Kapital for Capital*). *Izvestiya*, March 7, 1995, p. 5.

² James H. Brusstar and Ellen Jones, "Pessimistic, Polarized and Politicized. Attitudes Within the Russian Officer Corps". *Strategic Forum*, No. 15, January 1994, p. 1.

³ Ariel Cohen, "Russian Constitutional Drafts: How Democratic Are They?" *Heritage Foundation Background Paper* No. 949, June 30, 1993.

⁴ Personal interviews, Russian government officials, March-April 1995.

secret police. The service has been granted wide powers to conduct investigations and perform surveillance in total secrecy. Once again, as in the case of Chechnya, the constitutional freedoms of Russians have been trampled upon.

Threats to Free Media. Veteran analyst Julia Wishnevsky has pointed out the Yeltsin administration's success in controlling electronic media, especially central television. In late 1993, a former *Pravda* journalist, Boris Mironov, was appointed chairman of the State Committee on the Press. Before he was fired in the fall of 1994, Mironov funneled huge subsidies to hard-line ultranationalist newspapers. "If to be a Russian nationalist means to be a fascist, then I am a fascist," said Mironov.⁵

Vlad Listyev, Director General of the largest Russian TV network and a popular talk show host, was gunned down in the entrance to his apartment building on March 1, 1995. On October 17, 1994, investigative reporter Dmitrii Kholodov of *Moskovskii Komsomoletz* was murdered by an exploding briefcase. Kholodov was in the midst of investigating corruption in the military at the time. Others have been slain while investigating organized crime. Journalists in the regions have been tortured and killed. The print media is coming under increasing pressure, as the Moscow government owns printing presses and manipulates the prices of newsprint and subsidies to newspapers.

The Criminalization of Politics. Criminal ties were evident in the recent gangland-style murder of three Duma deputies. Moreover, Russian Interior Ministry experts warn against the ever-growing influence of Russian mafiosi "...among law enforcement organs and other organs of power." But the Yeltsin administration is notoriously ineffective in fighting crime and corruption. Despite its draconian decrees, known criminal figures remain unpunished and free to penetrate the Russian body politic. At the same time, the hard-liners are using lawlessness to promote their incendiary political causes.

Organized crime is reaching the highest echelons of power in Russia. According to a high level source in Moscow, between one quarter and one third of the deputies in the next Duma may have ties to organized crime, effectively making it the largest faction in the Parliament. And in the same fashion that the Afghan veterans bolstered the Russian mob in the 1980s, the veterans of Chechnya will do it in the 1990s.

The Fascist Threat. Extremist Russian nationalism, neo-Nazism and fascism, is yet another serious threat to Russian democratic development.⁶ The nationalists, who comprise a broad spectrum, from Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's "Liberal Democratic Party", well-represented in the Duma, to Vladimir Barkashov's Russian National Unity and the National Republican Party of Nicholas Lysenko, unanimously support the Chechnya war.

Nazi literature is freely sold in the streets of Moscow and St. Petersburg as Russia prepares itself to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the victory over Nazi Germany, which cost the USSR alone 26 million lives. The nationalists are united in their xenophobia, especially in hatred of the United States and the West. These extremists are involved in extensive paramilitary training programs. One of their most important leaders, judo black belt Vladimir Barkashov, claims to have 10,000 well-trained fighters under his command. The Russian security services put this number at 2,000. Other organizations have from several dozens to several hundred

⁵ Julia Wishnevsky, "Overview of the Media in Russia, 1994", Manuscript.

⁶ For a complete treatment of the subject, see Walter Laqueur, *Black Hundred: The Rise of the Extreme Right in Russia*, (New York: Harper Collins, 1993), especially parts 3 and 4.

storm troopers each. The Russian law enforcement organs, including the prosecutor's office, reportedly sympathize with the nationalist extremists. Defectors from Barkashov's organization claim that a deliberate attempt to penetrate the military and security services is under way.⁷

Foreign Policy Crises:

Chechnya focused the world's attention on Russia's increasingly threatening policy in the former Soviet space. Moscow brought pressure against its neighbors to allow Russian Army bases to be located in the Transcaucasus and Central Asia. Russian-Ukrainian relations are strained over the issues of the Crimea and the Black Sea Fleet. Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev called for the use of force to defend the newly invented ethnic group, "Russian-speakers", in the so called "near abroad". This is at a time when Russian speakers in Chechnya, both ethnic Russians and Chechens, were being killed by the thousands.

Other foreign policy and bilateral U.S.-Russian issues include:

- *The sale of Russian nuclear reactors to Iran*
- *Russia's refusal to sign the Partnership for Peace agreement*
- *Russia's opposition to NATO expansion*
- *The disappearance three weeks ago without a trace of an American rescue worker, Fredrick Cuny*
- *The expulsion of American journalist Steve LeVine under a slim pretext*

Given this situation, the question arises, should President Clinton go to Moscow, and if yes, what should he accomplish during his visit:

Clinton's V-E Day Visit to Moscow Should Not Be an Empty Ceremony

President Clinton should not be going to Moscow on V-E day. The president would do better if he travelled to London. The Clinton administration flip-flopped on the V-E day trip to Russia. Despite vociferous criticism from Senators Bob Dole, Mitch McConnell and William Roth,⁸ as well as from members of the House of Representatives,⁹ from the mass media and the policy community, the President decided to go to Moscow.

The Clinton administration has declared U.S.-Russian relations as one of its greatest foreign policy successes. The White House and the State Department now proclaim that no "single event or issue" can derail U.S.-Russian cooperation. According to this view, 25,000 killed in Chechnya, the sale of nuclear reactors to Iran, and torpedoing the expansion of NATO should not be seen as damaging. The White House also denies the existence of a "Yeltsin-first" policy, which links the U.S. exclusively to Boris Yeltsin. The Clinton administration appears to be in denial of the current and very real crisis in U.S.-Russian relations.

⁷ Personal interviews in Moscow, July 1994.

⁸ See Sen. Dole's speech at the opening of the Nixon Center, March 1, 1995; Sen. McConnell's speech at the U.S.-Russia Business Council meeting, 28 March 1995, and W. Roth's floor statement, March 22, 1995.

⁹ H. Con. Res 25, February 7, 1995.

Clinton's Agenda for the V-E Summit. Since President Clinton is going to Moscow, he should attempt to salvage the very important relations that the U.S. and Russia have been attempting to build since Mikhail Gorbachev's rapprochement with Ronald Reagan. To do so, President Clinton should:

- **Recognize that there is a serious crisis in relations between Russia and the U.S.** The crisis is being caused by Russia's inability to successfully integrate into the West almost four years after the collapse of the USSR. Russia is in search of a national identity and falls back on patterns of great power imperialism that were typical of its czarist and Soviet predecessors. Russia's potential for aggression also feeds on its own economic weakness due to half-hearted attempts at economic reform.
- **Stop Russia's nuclear deal with Iran.** Clinton should offer Russia some "carrots". At the same time, the whole range of retaliatory options should be kept in mind as "sticks", including cancellation of the \$6.6 billion in recently approved I.M.F. credits, \$2.4 billion in Eximp Bank loan guarantees, \$1.1 billion in World Bank loans and EC assistance programs.
- **Assure an end to the Chechen conflict.** Secure a promise from President Yeltsin to put a conclusive end to military operations in Chechnya. Russia should especially refrain from aerial and artillery bombardments, which have caused a high number of civilian casualties. Russia should transfer responsibility for resolution of the Chechen crisis to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The OSCE should begin a negotiation process that would result in new elections in Chechnya.
- **Secure Russia's ascendancy to the PFP and Moscow's acceptance of NATO expansion.** Clinton should reiterate to Yeltsin, Grachev and Kozyrev that NATO expansion does not threaten Russia, as the new Central European NATO members will not have borders with Russia and do not harbor aggressive intentions against Moscow. Clinton should secure Russia's joining the PFP, which is a key framework for post-Cold War cooperation in Europe. In addition, he should clarify to the Russians that renunciation of the CFE is unacceptable and will lead to a new arms race in Europe.
- **Ensure Russia's non-intervention in the "near abroad".** Clinton should unequivocally state to Boris Yeltsin that threats to use force against sovereign states of the former Soviet Union are unacceptable. The so-called protection of co-ethnics unleashed World War II as well as the current war in the former Yugoslavia. Russia might bring about a catastrophe if it pursues an aggressive policy against its neighbors.
- **Express strong support for Russian democracy.** President Clinton should meet with Russian politicians of various stripes. He also should express support for democratic reformers and human rights activists such as Elena Bonner, Sergei Kovalev and Yegor Gaidar. In his address to the Russian people, the President should state that democratic reform leading to a prosperous market economy is the goal of the West, not support of a particular individual. Behind closed doors, he should clarify to Yeltsin and other Russians that the scheduled elections in 1995 and 1996 matter to the U.S., and that their abolition would irreparably damage relations between the two countries.

President Clinton chose a formidable challenge when he decided to go to Moscow amidst the Chechen crisis. Much of this challenge is of his own creation, as he unequivocally backed Boris Yeltsin and failed to oppose Russian excesses in Chechnya effectively. The President must now rise to this

challenge and demonstrate that his "special relationship" with Boris Yeltsin is really working in the interests of the U.S.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.