

ANTI-SEMITISM IN RUSSIA

HEARING
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
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UNITED STATES SENATE
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ANTI-SEMITISM IN RUSSIA

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1999

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EUROPEAN AFFAIRS,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:10 p.m. in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Gordon Smith (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Senators Smith, Biden and Wellstone.

Senator SMITH. Let me say that we welcome you to this Senate Foreign Relations Committee's Subcommittee on European Affairs hearing. We expect Senator Biden will arrive briefly. He will join Senator Wellstone and me.

It is an honor to have you with us, Senator.

Senator WELLSTONE. Thank you.

Senator SMITH. We are here today to discuss an issue that I think weighs heavily on all of our hearts. Our desire and purpose here today is to see if we can't flesh out some ways to make a difference and improve a situation that is deteriorating as we speak.

I had occasion in the capacity of my committee chairmanship to travel to Eastern Europe recently, in November. I went out of my way to make a pilgrimage of sorts to a horrible place, a place in Poland called Auschwitz.

It left an impression upon me that is one I will never forget, one I will always try to act upon to see that within my ability and power such things never happen again. It is because of that impression that, with all the more alarm, we hear of statements coming from leaders of the Communist Party in Russia, members of the Duma in Russia, that remind us that this ultimate human hatred is still very much alive in the hearts of too many.

It does seem to me that, if this committee can do anything, it is to bring attention to an issue. We are going to be called upon to vote on lots of foreign aid with which we hope to help Russia. But, as a precondition to helping, we also have an expectation that international agreements that guarantee religious freedom and freedom of conscience will be observed.

It was with great sorrow that I saw Russia a year or so ago pass its law on religious association, which was designed, I believe, to be hurtful to religious minorities. It seemed to me that these kinds of things were the beginning of a return to the mentality that produced pogroms of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Whether you are a Jehovah's Witness, a Mormon, a Jew, or a Catholic and you have experienced religious persecution, it usually

is in one's heart to reach out to help those who are likely to be victimized by others.

So it is for that reason that we are gathered here today, to help the Jewish community in Russia, a community with a population of probably 500,000 to 600,000 people, to see if we cannot help them find a surer footing in a society that is increasingly in difficulty both politically and economically, to see that they are not made victims yet again.

We have a distinguished panel with which we wish to explore this subject. We welcome you, Rabbi Goldschmidt, and we are honored that you would be here.

We are delighted that both Mr. Mark Levin, the Executive Director of the National Council on Soviet Jewry, and Mr. David Harris, the Executive Director of the American Jewish Committee are here. We thank you all for participating.

First let me turn to my colleague, Senator Wellstone, who I know feels this issue in a very personal way. Senator.

Senator WELLSTONE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am going to be very brief.

I would thank Rabbi Goldschmidt for being here and thank Mr. Levin and Mr. Harris. I am very interested in what you have to say.

I think that our goal, Mr. Chairman, is to really figure out what the U.S. Senate and our government best can do to really help people in Russia who are having to deal with anti-Semitism. I can imagine any number of different policy initiatives or things that we might do on a variety of different fronts. But I am anxious to hear your recommendations.

I was thinking, as we were getting started with this hearing, a little bit about my father. You know, quite often when events such as these are in the middle of the day, people have other things to do. I know there is a tremendous interest in this subject, but there are other commitments.

This is a hearing that, unless I am called to the floor of the Senate for an amendment, I would not want to miss. I am the son of a Jewish immigrant from Russia. So I want to try to make a difference as a United States Senator.

Senator SMITH. Thank you, Senator.

Rabbi Goldschmidt, we will begin with you.

STATEMENT OF PINCHAS GOLDSCHMIDT, CHIEF RABBI OF MOSCOW, MOSCOW CHORAL SYNAGOGUE, MOSCOW, RUSSIA, AND DIRECTOR OF THE FOREIGN POLICY DESK OF THE RUSSIAN JEWISH CONGRESS

Rabbi GOLDSCHMIDT. Honorable Chairman and Senators, I would like, first of all, to thank the U.S. Senate and you, Mr. Chairman, of the Subcommittee of European Affairs of the Foreign Relations Committee, as well as Senator Jesse Helms, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, for inviting me to testify on behalf of the Jewish community in the Russian Federation.

I have been privileged to serve the Russian Jewish community during the last 10 years as the Rabbi of Moscow and, since the organization of the Russian Jewish Congress, I have been responsible

for foreign relations of the organized Jewish community of Russia, the Russian Jewish Congress.

The Russian Jewish Congress has been established in 1996 by a joint initiative of the spiritual and financial leaders of our community and has over 48 branches in all of Russia. It is the prime umbrella group of the estimated over 1 million Jews in Russia and is dealing with fundraising, political representation, anti-defamation, and the development of our community.

If I would draw a parallel to the United States, I could say that it is a combination of a "Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish American Organizations" and the "United Jewish Appeal." The head of the Russian Jewish Congress is its president, Mr. Vladimir Goussinsky, a well known business tycoon and a champion of the free press.

The Russian Jewish Congress has had some major achievements during the few years of its existence. First of all, it united the whole community, secular and religious. Second, it became a powerful voice within Russia against anti-Semitism and for democracy. At the inaugural of the Holocaust Memorial Synagogue on Victory Hill in Moscow during the early days of September of last year, President Boris Yeltsin attended the ceremonies. He was the first Russian head of state to attend a Jewish event during this century.

Nevertheless, as time has progressed, we experienced a new wave of anti-Semitism as presented in my statement.

However, for the first time there was a strong response within Russia from its Jewish community and, subsequently, from the Russian Government.

Faltering political and economic conditions in Russia today have brought fear and uncertainty to much of the population. President Yeltsin's poor health and the frequent change of prime ministers have led to a general lack of confidence in the government. At the same time, nationalist groups and the Communist Party appear to be gaining strength.

The Communist Party to a large extent engineered the resurgence of political mainstream anti-Semitism after the crisis of August 17. The KPRF, or Communist Party under the leadership of Mr. Gennady Zyuganov, has sought to use the fact that some ministers in the last government were of Jewish descent to blame the economic crisis on the Jews. This tendency toward anti-Semitism and racism can be understood in the wider context of the transformation of the Communist Parties of Eastern Europe, which had to find new political platforms. While most Communist Parties in Central and Eastern Europe have evolved, in general, to the social democratic model or to other forms of left wing activism, in Russia the Communist Party has turned to nationalism which, in fact, makes it a National Socialist Party.

The right wing of the party, represented by General Albert Makashov and Mr. Viktor Ilyukhin, accused the Jews of genocide against the people of Russia. When liberal lawmakers tried to censure Makashov on November 4, the Communist Party, with one exception, defended Makashov's statements.

In reaction to General Makashov's October comments and the Duma's failure to censure him, President Yeltsin requested a statement from Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov, regarding

his party's position on anti-Semitism. Mr. Zyuganov's response reiterated the accusations made by the most anti-Semitic members of his party. In the form of a letter to the Minister of Justice and the National Security Council, Zyuganov's response contained harsh anti-Semitic references reminiscent of the old Soviet era and served only to heighten concerns about anti-Semitism in Russia.

Zyuganov stated that he believes "that too many people with strange sounding family names mingle in the internal affairs of Russia," a clear reference to the powerful Jews in the economy and in the government.

The proliferation of radical anti-Semitic racist literature and journals is growing. This literature was available in the not so recent past at any metro station in Moscow. However, Luzhkov responded with a crackdown on the dissemination of fascist symbolism in the city, arresting transgressors and confiscating material. In other areas of the Russian Federation, anti-Semitic material is readily available on the streets.

I would like to make a few comments on anti-Semitism on the right of the political spectrum.

The rise of the Neo-Nazi movement is also worrisome. On the far right of the political spectrum, Barkashov's "Russian National Unity," with thousands of paramilitary troops, gives much cause for concern. They planned to hold their annual convention in Moscow, but Moscow Mayor Luzhkov banned the meeting and fired a police official who failed to break up a march of the Russian National Unity movement. Interior Minister Sergei Stepashin said he would sack chiefs of police departments if they did not oppose Neo-Nazi rallies and demonstrations. President Yeltsin has repeatedly denounced anti-Semitism and formed a special commission to fight the rise of anti-Semitism in the country.

The Moscow prosecutor's office did revise its earlier decision and opened criminal proceedings against Barkashov, who had voiced threats against Luzhkov. On the other hand, Communist deputies in the Duma have railroaded the motion to prohibit the use of Nazi symbolism, which is used by fascist groups.

In the West, Zyuganov tries to picture himself as a liberal social democrat, while at home he pursues national socialist policies. The Jewish community of Russia is of the opinion that, until Zyuganov and his cohorts disassociate themselves from the virulent anti-Semitism in the party voiced during the last few months, the United States of America and any other country should not invite these members of the Duma for inter-parliamentary discussions.

Honorable Chairman and Senators, I would like again to stress the importance of the ongoing battle for the voice of democracy and tolerance in Russia. This pressure yields results, even if belatedly.

Only last week did Mr. Zyuganov publicly on national TV distance himself from the Russian National Unity organization of Barkashov. We are sure that this statement was a result of mounting international pressure on the Communist Party.

We believe also that this pressure should continue. Kondratenko, sort of the Governor of Krasnodar, who has made many comments against the Jewish community, against a Masonic-Judaic conspiracy, has sort of apologized to the local Jewish community in Krasnodar, expounding on the distinction between Jews and Zion-

ists. Makashov, however, has announced his bid for the Governorship of one of Siberia's areas, and talk about a Presidential bid is circulating in Moscow.

The order of the day is to marginalize anti-Semitic political forces and forge a large national consensus of Russian political, communal and religious leaders, who will stand strong against those political forces which want to split the country with racism and anti-Semitism.

The United States of America and the democracies of Europe should, in their dialog with the leaders of Russia, stress the importance of a strong stand against racism, which is crucial to the well-being and internal stability of the Russian Federation.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Rabbi Goldschmidt appears in the appendix on page 35.]

Senator SMITH. Thank you, Rabbi, very much.

I think I misspoke, Mark Levin, when I introduced you earlier. You are the Executive Director of the National Conference—not Council—on Soviet Jewry. We welcome you, sir.

STATEMENT OF MARK B. LEVIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SOVIET JEWRY, WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. LEVIN. Thank you, Senator.

It is a pleasure to appear before your subcommittee in behalf of the NCSJ. I want to begin by recognizing your commitment, as well as that of Senators Biden and Wellstone and many of your colleagues, to fighting this rise of anti-Semitism in Russia and elsewhere in the former Soviet Union.

I ask that my full written testimony be included for the record.

Senator SMITH. Without objection.

Mr. LEVIN. What I would do is just summarize briefly and not cover the same parts that Rabbi Goldschmidt just did. But before I begin, I would like to give special recognition to Senator Biden, for his involvement on behalf of the Jews in the former Soviet Union which goes back more than 20 years.

Senator BIDEN. It's only because I have been here so long. These guys are doing the same thing. I am just getting to be a relic.

Mr. LEVIN. I will let you say that, Senator. But we have had the opportunity to work together for many years and I think that work has paid off as we have seen such great strides being made in the last few years. It is unfortunate that we are all here today talking about a problem that many of us thought would begin to recede, if not disappear. But, unfortunately, it has not.

Mr. Chairman, I would ask that a statement by the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society be included in the record. They would like to associate themselves with the remarks of both me and my colleagues. I will provide that for the record.

Senator SMITH. Without objection.

[The information referred to appears in the appendix on page 34.]

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Chairman, you know that one of our member agencies, the ADL, and also the National Conference offered for the record a white paper on "The Reemergence of Political Anti-Semitism in Russia." We had the opportunity to present this paper to

Secretary of State Albright before her trip to Moscow last months. We would also put that into the record, if that is acceptable.

Senator SMITH. Without objection.

[The information referred to appears in the appendix on page 50.]

Mr. LEVIN. The NCSJ supports United States cooperation with Russia in many ways and is in close contact with United States and Russian officials. We continue to support U.S. efforts to aid this region and believe that an active foreign policy is one of the best antidotes to anti-Semitic rhetoric.

The NCSJ supports administration and congressional actions in condemning the Communist Party's attempt to rekindle anti-Semitism.

Mr. Chairman, let me just spend a minute or two on the current situation in Russia.

Economic deterioration and dislocation are opening the door for anti-Semitic scapegoating in Russia. This has broad ramifications since anti-Semitism and the rule of law also indicate the relative health of Russian society.

In recent months, anti-Semitism has become a political tool for numerous members of the Communist Party. In fact, I would say this is a cynical attempt on their part to use anti-Semitism to strengthen their presence in the Duma and, hopefully, catapult that to a Presidential candidate who would be successful in the next election in the year 2000.

Parliamentary elections set for later this year—as I mentioned, with the Presidential vote to follow—can only increase the incentive for certain candidates to promote or tolerate inflammatory appeals to popular dissatisfaction unless such behavior is commonly understood to be unacceptable. That is where we need the Russian political leadership to continue to speak out.

You have heard about General Albert Makashov and Mr. Ilyukhin. I think it is worth just mentioning some of their words.

General Makashov has said "Death to the Yids." Earlier this week, he said to a gathering, "We will be anti-Semites and we must be victorious." I am paraphrasing. The whole speech is much worse.

Mr. Ilyukhin asserted during a parliamentary session in December that Jews were committing genocide against the Russian people. Ilyukhin complained that there were too many Jews, as you have heard, in President Yeltsin's inner circle and called for "ethnic quotas" in government posts.

You have heard briefly about Gennady Zyuganov. It is not worth repeating too much except that he did say, "Zionism has actually shown itself to be one of the strains of theory and practice of the most aggressive imperialist circles striving for world domination. In this respect, it is related to fascism."

As Rabbi Goldschmidt said, these are words we have not heard since the height of Brezhnev and his successors. Rabbi Goldschmidt mentioned the Russian National Unity. This was an offshoot of a group that was thought not to have much strength. But in the last few months, it has spread its hateful message throughout Russia.

It has local groups not just in Krasnodar but in many parts of Russia.

In essence, the legislative branch of the Russian Government has become a vehicle to espouse anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism is being used by extremists, but the extremists are no longer marginal.

Fortunately, President Yeltsin and others in his government have spoken out, as have some local and regional political figures. But it is not enough right now. They need to continue to speak out and they need to continue to take concrete action against those who violate Russian law.

We call upon the Russian Government to strictly enforce those laws that are already on the books against engaging in hate crime activities and we would hope that they would take vigorous action.

We would ask that Congress continue to speak out and continue to make this issue a front burner issue in all of your contacts with your Russian counterparts. We believe congressional contacts with Duma members and with Prime Minister Primakov in his visit to the United States next month will have a tremendous impact.

We have also called for greater NGO involvement in Russia and the other republics to try to work with our Russian counterparts to use the mass media that is available to get messages across that deal with tolerance and pluralism, to try to penetrate below what many Russians are hearing today.

We are prepared to work with our government, as well as with the Russian Government and Russian NGO's, to see that these types of projects can be undertaken.

In summary, it is imperative that United States policy continue to engage and to support pro-democracy forces in Russia and elsewhere and to counter negative messages of ethnic hatred, such as those adopted by the Communist Party of Russia.

This is the time to send a strong message to Russia denouncing the growing anti-Semitism and urging their officials to take concrete action to eradicate and repudiate anti-Semitism.

The protection of minority rights within the over-arching goal of promoting human rights is at the heart of this effort. Russia's successful development toward democracy depends on it.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Levin appears in the appendix on page 47].

Senator SMITH. Thank you, Mark. We do denounce it and state publicly that our ability to assist Russia is really predicated on their ability to live up to their agreements on human rights and religious conscience. That is how one Senator feels. Next is David Harris. Welcome, sir.

**STATEMENT OF DAVID A. HARRIS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE, NEW YORK, NY**

Mr. HARRIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is a pleasure to be back here before this subcommittee.

I would like, first of all, to express my deepest appreciation to you, Mr. Chairman, as well as to Senators Biden and Wellstone, for the opportunity to appear here on this distinguished panel.

Mr. Chairman, I have the privilege of representing the American Jewish Committee, with which I have been associated since 1979. Much of that time, given my own background in Soviet affairs and

knowledge of the Russian language, has been devoted to matters affecting the U.S.S.R. and the post-Soviet successor States.

The American Jewish Committee, our Nation's oldest human relations agency, was founded in 1906. We are in close contact with Jews throughout the former Soviet Union, travel regularly to Russia, commission research and polling on conditions affecting Russian Jews, and meet frequently with high level Russian officials to discuss issues of concern to Jews inside Russia as well as Russia's relations with the United States and the countries of the Middle East.

Mr. Chairman, the American Jewish Committee was founded in 1906 in response to the pogroms of Jews in czarist Russia. Two months after our founding, we established a press bureau. The reason for that, it was explained, was as follows, and I quote: "For the prevention of massacres of Jews in Russia, no means can be considered so effective as the enlightenment of the people of the Western world concerning real conditions in Russia."

These AJC leaders were right on target at the time. Their approach is equally valid 92 years later.

Human rights danger zones require outside monitoring and exposure, lest potential perpetrators believe they can act with impunity and benefit from the world's indifference.

Senators, I wish to commend you. You are carrying on a remarkable congressional tradition, dating back to the last century, of examining Russian attitudes toward and treatment of Jews.

In the earliest known case, on June 11, 1879, Congress passed a joint resolution that cited laws of the Russian Government that "no Hebrew can hold real estate" and condemned Russia because a naturalized American Jewish citizen was prohibited from gaining title to land in Russia he had purchased and paid for.

On December 13, 1911, this Senate Committee on Foreign Relations held a hearing on S.J. Res. 60, "a joint resolution providing for the termination of the treaty of commerce and navigation between the United States of America and Russia concluded at St. Petersburg December 18, 1832."

The Congress abrogated the treaty because of Russian discrimination against American Jewish citizens in the issuance of entry visas to Russia.

This marked the first, though not the last, time Congress would establish a direct linkage between Russia's human rights performance and America's economic policy toward that country. The landmark Jackson-Vanik amendment, passed over 60 years later by Congress, linked the extension of Most Favored Nation trade status with the emigration policy of Communist countries.

That 1911 hearing was addressed principally by the leadership of the American Jewish Committee. While honored to follow in the footsteps of these eminent leaders, I am, frankly, dismayed that the issues that preoccupied them in the early years of this century remain with us in one form or another as the century closes.

One hundred twenty years after Congress first acted regarding Russia's mistreatment of Jews and 88 years after the American Jewish Committee first appeared before this very committee, we gather here once again to examine the condition of hundreds of

thousands of Jews residing in Russia, living in an uncertain environment.

To begin with, then, anti-Semitism in Russia has a tragically long history. Mistreatment of Jews in Russia can be documented for literally hundreds of years. Waves of violence, blood libels, restrictive or punitive decrees involving education, employment, residency, and military service, and other forms of repression, have been all too familiar features of the Russia historical landscape.

As a result, countless Jews were killed and millions emigrated, especially to this country. Still, many remained. Russia was, after all, their place of birth, their home, and all that was familiar to them.

Precisely because of the centuries-old pattern of persecution, punctuated, it must be noted, by occasional periods of hope and relative calm, depending largely, if not entirely, on the ruler of the day, there is a need to take seriously manifestations of anti-Semitism in Russia at any time, and not least today.

Put most starkly, we ignore the lessons of history at our peril.

The situation today is extraordinarily complex. On the one hand, Jewish life in the post-Communist era is miraculously re-emerging, notwithstanding the relentless, 7 decades long effort of the Communist apparatus to uproot and destroy it. Synagogues, schools, community centers, and a myriad of other Jewish institutions are developing, and contacts between Russian Jews and Jews beyond Russia's borders are frequent and unrestricted. The presence here on our panel of Chief Rabbi Goldschmidt of Moscow is testament to this remarkable development.

But, at the very same time, the intractability of the country's economic and political travails should be a cautionary note for us, as should its fragile democratic system.

The fear persists that this embryonic democratic effort could yield—perhaps in the upcoming elections—to a more nationalist, authoritarian, or Communist regime, whose rallying cry might well include the alleged responsibility of the Jews or, in only slightly more veiled terms, the “non-Russians,” for Russia's economic stagnation, loss of empire, or domestic turmoil. In a word, Mr. Chairman, scapegoating.

It has worked before in Russian history. It could work again. The most recent disturbing anti-Semitic incidents which have been documented by my colleagues underscore the complexity of the situation.

Again, history has shown the enduring appeal of anti-Semitism as a political weapon in this part of the world, especially during periods of transition, when a country like Russia is convulsed by dramatic and unsettling change. This is one such period.

Should political, economic, and social conditions improve, Jewish vulnerability could ebb. But if conditions either stagnate or decline further, the Jews might well be blamed, as they have in the past, for Russia's daunting difficulties, accused of profiting at Russia's expense, or attacked as outsiders disloyal to “Mother Russia.”

The best antidote to anti-Semitism in such situations would be clear, consistent, and unambiguous statements from Russia's leading political figures and by spokesmen for the country's key institu-

tions, coupled with appropriate action to relegate anti-Semitism to society's margins.

Come elections, will there be Russian politicians with the courage to denounce unequivocally those who openly or in coded language "play the anti-Semitic card" and, instead, appeal to the higher instincts of the Russian people? One can only hope so.

Will there be a critical mass of the Russian people prepared to reject any such crude charges against the Jews? Again, one can only hope so.

But we are entering an election period when there will be a temptation to sound the nationalist theme, that is, to pander to a disaffected electorate looking for simplistic explanations for the country's deeply rooted difficulties, or to conjure up "enemies", internal or external, who allegedly undermine the country's well-being. This could prove dangerous.

Some key Russian institutions, especially the Russian Orthodox Church, could, if they choose, play a constructive role in this regard. The church, which occupies a privileged place in the religious life of Russia, has never undergone the kind of soul-searching and moral and historical reckoning regarding its relations with the Jews that the Catholic church and many Protestant churches, to their credit, have initiated in the second half of this century. Such an undertaking is overdue.

The Russian educational system surely could do much more to promote concepts of tolerance and understanding.

During the Communist era, when I had an opportunity to spend several months in the U.S.S.R. teaching in elementary and secondary schools in Moscow and Leningrad, an essential element of the prevailing ideology, however factually untrue, was the so-called "brotherhood of Soviet nationalities." Since it was a given, there was no need to teach it, or so the conventional Communist wisdom went.

Russia today desperately needs to teach its young people the importance, especially for a democratic society, of the genuine equality of all its citizens, be they of Jewish, Chechen, Gypsy, Armenian, or other origin.

Are new laws needed to deal with anti-Semitism and other forms of hate? That is a difficult question to answer, in part because our own American Bill of Rights enshrines freedom of speech, however repugnant it may sometimes be, as an essential tenet of democracy. At the same time, there are already several laws on the Russian books respecting incitement and empowering the government to prosecute publishers of extremist publications, including those deemed to be anti-Semitic. To date, however, even these laws have seldom been invoked, which may be interpreted benignly as another manifestation of the country's current inefficiency or more darkly as a calculated unwillingness to confront the country's hate mongers.

Mr. Chairman, in conclusion, I believe that we have the possibility of pursuing two parallel strategies to insure the well-being of Jews in Russia. The first is the recognition that democracy and democratic institutions are the best assurance that Jews, indeed all who live in Russia, will be governed by the rule of law, not by the rule of whim.

We have an extraordinary opportunity, previously unimagined or unimaginable, to help transform Russia into a full-fledged member of the family of democratic nations.

Needless to say, we cannot, as a Nation, do it alone, nor, as our experience since 1991 has demonstrated, are we yet assured of success. But to shrink from the challenge at this stage would be historically irresponsible.

Second, we, as a Nation, must continue to make clear to Russia and its leaders that, as they look to Washington for assistance, support, and recognition of their international standing, unstinting respect for democracy, human rights, and the rule of law is central to our bilateral agenda with Moscow, never a footnote or an afterthought.

History has, in fact, taught us that the political and social condition of Jews in a country such as Russia is just about the most accurate barometric reading of the overall state of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

In this regard, the Congress and this subcommittee in particular, have a vitally important role to play in addressing the conditions of Jews in Russia. Judging from the impressive historical record, stretching back 120 years, and exemplified by hearings such as this one today, Mr. Chairman, I am confident that the Congress will continue to do so with characteristic distinction, unswerving principle, and relentless commitment.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Harris appears in the appendix on page 43.]

Senator SMITH. Thank you, David. That is an excellent statement.

We are privileged to be joined by Senator Biden, a pioneer in this fight.

We turn to you for your statement.

Senator BIDEN. Well, Mr. Chairman, thank you.

I was not much of a pioneer. But there are certain things that bring us all to public life. For each of us they are different, and one is not necessarily any more noble or worthy than another.

I was raised in a home where my father might have been referred to as a "righteous Christian." We would sit at the dinner table together. Our dinner table was a place where we gathered to talk and, incidentally, to eat, rather than gather to eat and, incidentally, to talk.

My father was one of those folks who brought us up in a certain way. Being Catholic, we were born with an almost equal sense of guilt that my Jewish friends seem to have. My father would always talk—and I mean this sincerely—about how the world stood silently by in the 1930's in the face of Hitler. He had a preoccupation with the Holocaust.

I might say, as a point of personal privilege—as we say in this body—the first time I took my sons, whom both of you have met, to Europe, some of my friends thought it was somewhat extreme that the first place I took them was to Dachau.

I am one who does believe that history repeats itself, that things can happen again. I think what we are seeing in all of Europe in different manifestations, not just with Jews but with Moslems in

the Balkans, and other different ethnic groupings, is truly amazing. Whoever thought we would hear in the late 1990's a declared policy of "ethnic cleansing?" Whoever thought we would be back in the position where we would have to have a hearing like this?

In 1994, back in the "good ol' days," Mr. Chairman, when my party controlled the Senate and I sat in your seat, I instituted a series of hearings in the fall of 1994, not long after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of anti-Semitism in the former Soviet Union. Mr. Levin's organization helped me at that time.

Everyone said at the time that, although it was "around," to use a colloquial phrase, it was not rooted, and it was not deep.

If you look at public opinion polls now in Russia, the majority of the Russian people declare themselves not to be anti-Semitic. The majority declare themselves to not share the views expressed by Zyuganov and the retired Communist General, who is as bright as his career was shining. But here we are.

Mr. Harris' little stroll down memory lane is worth thinking about. Here we are, 100 years later, more than a century after the first action of Congress on this subject.

Mr. HARRIS. 120 years.

Senator BIDEN. Yes, 120 years.

I just want to say in my opening statement—and I will ask that at some point my entire statement be placed in the record—to you, Mr. Chairman, that not only the Jewish community but all people of faith should be grateful that you are here. One of the things you notice about people is those issues which burn inside them such that you can see the light in their eyes.

One of the things that burns inside you is your notion of, and commitment to, religious freedom. I think it is indeed fortunate.

I agree with Mr. Harris. I do not have any legislative prescription of how to deal with this. I have a number of ideas that I want to discuss with you; and I want to hear what you think we should specifically be doing. But I think the single greatest comment is that of Justice Holmes, who said—and I am paraphrasing—that the cold light of day is the best disinfectant.

I think the best disinfectant to deal with these vermin is to expose them, as was the case 80-some years ago. It is also the case today.

So you are having this hearing, Mr. Chairman. And knowing you, as I have come to know you, I know you will persist in this issue. I think it is the single most significant contribution we can immediately make.

I would ask unanimous consent that the remainder of my statement be placed in the record, Mr. Chairman.

Senator SMITH. Without objection.

Senator BIDEN. I also would like to point out that there is that long history in Russia that is shameful, from the Pale of Settlement to the Black Hundreds that carried out their murderous activities, to what a lot of people found incredible and still believe in Russia and other places, the so-called Protocols of the Elders of Zion, which were totally debunked and exposed in 1921. But there are people, in 1991 and 2001 who will cling to the protocols as if they were real. They will hold on to the idea that we could again have someone who could try to pull off what Stalin, just before his

death, had been cooking up, the so-called Plot of Doctors, how Jewish doctors were hired by the United States to kill high ranking officials, et cetera.

This is almost the stuff of fiction. I mean, if we sat down with our children today in America and said we were going to write a horror movie about this, or we were going to write a play about this; they would say, "come on, Dad, who on Earth would buy that. I mean, let's get real and do something that is believable."

But, unfortunately, this is all too real.

So I would conclude, Mr. Chairman, by saying to you and to our colleagues who are here that I think one of the unfortunate results of the demise of communism, in the minds of autocrats, totalitarians, and dictator-like people, is that they have no unifying glue to hold them together anymore. Milosevic is moving to rabid nationalism in order to sustain his "raison d'etat."

The Reds and the Browns in the Duma are resorting to scapegoating, and the most time honored one in Russia is the Jews.

We are talking about 600,000 to maybe 1.2 million people, maximum. Those are the numbers we are talking about.

I always find it phenomenal what I say to some of the "wackos" who show up occasionally at my town meetings. For example, last year the Ku Klux Klan showed up at one of my town meetings. When I hear their theories, I think to myself it is amazing how powerful these Jewish folks must be if 600,000 of them can control all of Russia.

I am a Zionist in my heart and I think that your being here, Rabbi, is very helpful to us.

I will cease and desist now and, after the chairman asks some questions, I would like to ask you each some questions, particularly you, Rabbi, about what the devil we can do now beyond exposing this. What do we do now and how widespread is it.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Senator Biden appears in the appendix on page 33.]

Senator SMITH. Thank you, Senator Biden.

I think I have the same questions as Senator Biden. So we will just get right to them.

It first comes to mind, as you look at the Russian politicians who are vying for the Presidency, that certainly Mr. Primakov has to be considered as a very viable candidate. I wonder if you can share with me what you know of his views on this issue.

Senator BIDEN. This may cost you a cabinet position, Rabbi.

Rabbi GOLDSCHMIDT. Mr. Chairman, Senator Biden, after Makashov's statement, the first one to come out with a public statement against Makashov was Mayor Luzhkov of Moscow. Then the Presidential administration, President Yeltsin, came with a statement. Only later did Prime Minister Primakov come out with a statement.

I remember when the Marina Roscha Synagogue was burned down. I think it was about 3 years ago. Back then there was only a statement to the foreign press of President Yeltsin. There was no statement about racial intolerance to the local press. No one has seen it as important that they have to come to the site, visit the site of the bombing of a synagogue.

However, last year, when the Marina Roscha Synagogue was bombed for the second time, there was right away a visit and also right away statements by government leaders.

If the question is what should be done now in order to fight this new wave of intolerance, racism, and anti-Semitism, which is, by the way, a growing problem, I think since anti-Semitism is basically politically engineered as a new political platform of the left, the Communist Party being the majority party of the Russian parliament, it is, first of all, necessary to fight politically by putting pressure against the Communist Party, by telling them you cannot be part of, or show yourselves as being democrats, being part of the Western Hemisphere and the enlightened world, if you pursue such policies.

Senator Biden mentioned the law on religion and conscience which was passed. This law was passed mainly because of the support of the Communist Party.

There is a second problem, the problem of law enforcement. There are laws against racial incitement in Russia—Article 280 and Article 288. We repeatedly asked the Prosecutor General, Mr. Skuratov—who, in the meantime has left his office—that he should enforce this law against Makashov, against Barkashov, and others. Up to 2 months ago, no criminal investigation was opened against these people.

Only as of late—and we believe it part of local pressure and international pressure, and thanks to letters of the U.S. Senate and the Congress—have we seen that there is a step in the right direction and that criminal investigations are also being opened against them. The problem is that people like Makashov and Ilyukhin have immunity as members of the parliament. The parliament has to decide to withdraw immunity, and I do not see this happening in today's parliament where, basically, the Communist Party, along with the Liberal Democratic Party of Zhirinovskiy, control the parliament.

So it is a problem of law enforcement. It is a political problem. I think that the Senate, the government, and the people, in dialog with the people of Russia, with the legislators, with the leaders of the government, should make a strong point. I think that by meeting and working with the leaders of the various religious groups and leaders of the intelligentsia as well as leading entertainment figures it would be possible to create a new consensus in Russia which will reflect the popular poll taken that there is no place in Russia for the repetition of history, for using anti-Semitism as a political tool, and, much worse, that it should trickle down to the streets and that it should become violent.

Senator SMITH. Thank you.

Mr. Levin.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Chairman, we need Prime Minister Primakov to be a leader. We need him to speak out forcefully. We need him to lead those elements, those few elements, that remain in the Duma to be a counterforce to the dominant presence of the Communists and nationalists. We need him to do it now.

If he is going to be a Presidential candidate, if he is going to be one of the primary candidates, then he needs to demonstrate to all of his citizens what it means to be a leader, what it means to lead

Russia into the 21st century as a country that is moving in a democratic and open direction.

It is not easy. It will be difficult. But we expect that from leaders, to take the difficult road when they have to.

Senator SMITH. Are you seeing any evidence of it, Mark?

Mr. LEVIN. Not much. Not much. Thankfully, when Secretary Albright was in Moscow, in both meetings that she had with the Prime Minister she raised this issue and did not just ask but said that the Prime Minister had an obligation to speak out, to be out front in this effort, to show that Russia is not headed down a road that no one wants to see them travel again.

What we would like to see is, when he is in the United States next month, that he not only give a forceful message here but that he send that same message back to Russia.

There have been too many Russian politicians in the last year who have come here and given one message to the United States and have either delivered another message when they returned or not given that message at all.

Mr. Zyuganov has been a well practiced expert. He comes to the United States. He tries to portray himself as a moderate, not just in political terms but also as someone who is ready to reform the Soviet economy, and then, when he goes back to Russia, it is a whole different message, a whole different routine. What we would like to see is some consistency. We hope that Mr. Primakov will step up to the plate.

Senator SMITH. Are there candidates out there for President that cause you real heartburn?

Mr. LEVIN. Well, there are several. One is Mr. Zyuganov, who has made very clear that he sees himself as a candidate in the year 2000. There are some nationalists who have made noises.

General Makashov has talked about running for Governor in one of the regions in Russia. Who knows? He may decide that he would like a bigger position.

There is someone whose name we do not hear too much anymore because he has become a figure of ridicule. That is Mr. Zhirinovskiy, who did quite well in the last election. Hopefully, he won't reappear.

If you look at even the mainstream candidates, we hope that they have a message of inclusion, not exclusion, and that they are willing to lead. Those would be most notably Mayor Luzhkov, Mr. Yavlinsky, General Lebed. These are all potential candidates and these are ones who are given better than even odds of succeeding.

Senator SMITH. So to date, Mr. Luzhkov has been the one quickest off the mark to condemn Makashov?

Mr. LEVIN. Well, Yavlinsky has, as has Boris Nemsov. There is a pro-democratic element to Russian politics today. Unfortunately, it is a very small part of the Russian political scene. It is my hope that the reformist groups can get together and unify behind one candidate. But that has not been possible in the past.

Senator SMITH. Is it because there is a thread running through too many of the parties, a threat of anti-Semitism, the nationalist and Communist Parties?

Mr. LEVIN. They are using anti-Semitism, hatred of Jews, as one of the primary parts of their platform.

Senator SMITH. It is written down in their platform?

Mr. LEVIN. Oh, through and through. We can provide much literature on what the Communists and Russian National Unity people and others have circulated throughout Russia.

Rabbi Goldschmidt has been a victim of some of it.

Senator SMITH. We live in a day of pollsters. Is there anybody trying to find out how deeply these feelings run among the Russian people?

Mr. LEVIN. Yes. There are a number of these. The American Jewish Committee 2 years ago—or 3 years ago, David—did a study or poll?

Mr. HARRIS. If I may, Mr. Chairman—

Senator SMITH. Yes, please, David.

Mr. HARRIS [continuing]. As a 501(c)(3) organization, first of all, we are prevented from either endorsing or opposing candidates for office once declared.

Senator SMITH. I understand.

Mr. HARRIS. So I trust you will extend to us congressional immunity for anything said by this panel.

Senator SMITH. Oh, we will gladly grant it.

Senator BIDEN. I don't think that prohibits you from being involved in other countries, does it? You can express a preference for that. If you want to express a preference for either of us in here, that is all right, too.

Mr. HARRIS. As Mark Levin said, we have done polling in Russia. To the extent that it is reliable or dependable polling, our most recent survey was in 1996.

What we found there was not a terribly widespread, overt anti-Semitism, but what troubled us more was the great number of people who answered "don't know" to a whole battery of questions regarding Jewish issues.

This led us to the painful conclusion that there is a very substantial group of people—over a third of the population—that either could become indifferent or could be manipulated in times of populism. That concerns us greatly.

If I may, Mr. Chairman, I would make one other comment on the discussions that have taken place in the last few moments.

The United States has an extraordinarily complex bilateral agenda with Russia. It includes START II, START III, Kosovo, Bosnia, a whole host of issues related to very substantial questions of war, peace, security and stability throughout the world.

Our belief is that the U.S. Congress can continue to perform a profound service by insuring not only continued hearings to expose the situation, as you are doing today, but also repeated emphasis on the importance of maintaining these issues at or near the top of the bilateral agenda.

In the final analysis, we need to support democrats—and I say that with a lower case "d", Mr. Chairman.

Senator BIDEN. Oh? Why?

Mr. HARRIS. We need to support democrats in Russia and, as the democrats themselves in Russia have said, anti-Semitism corrodes the country's commitment to democracy. This is why I said in my opening comments that the best barometric reading of the country is, in fact, the social and political condition of the Jews.

You cannot have relative democracy. If Russia is going to go the democratic route, as we hope and pray it will and as we have worked toward, then the notion of mutual respect, tolerance, and marginalizing extremist views must be constant and consistent. It cannot simply occur episodically or out of one side of the mouth alone.

If Russia wants to be a full member of the G-8 and a full partner of the United States in addressing these very pressing issues on the bilateral agenda, then I think it has to be drummed in again and again that there can be no compromise in the mainstream of society with anti-Semitism either in its overt or its coded expression.

I fear that there are those Russian leaders today who think they can have it both ways, who think they can straddle the fence.

Our task, I believe, is to send the message that you cannot straddle the fence on defining issues, on touchstone issues, such as this.

Senator SMITH. So hearings, keeping this as one of the priority issues are important. What else? Do we need to encourage something like hate crimes legislation there? Would that be helpful? What else could we do?

Mr. HARRIS. Hearings, Senator, are very important. Mark Levin and I are colleagues from the trenches of over 20 years of Soviet Jewry activism in the bad old days. We have worked together and we know that the exposure from hearings like this, the interest of Members of Congress who travel to Russia, the interventions of Members of Congress meeting with Russian officials, and the interest of the media are all essential elements in what ultimately is a complex and elusive formula for trying to address successfully these questions.

Again, the message has to come from the highest levels of the administration consistently, as it has to date and as we trust it will in the future, that there can be no straddling of the fence, and that business will not continue as usual if, in fact, Russia adopts a kind of truncated democracy, at best, if not a reversion to some form of authoritarianism or extreme form of nationalism.

Senator SMITH. David—or Mark, maybe you can comment on this, too—right now the Jehovah's Witnesses are under assault in a trial in Russia. Does it help you to coordinate these things with other faiths that are having similar, though not identical, experiences?

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Chairman, the history of the Soviet Jewry movement has in some ways mirrored the history of the human rights movement in what was once the Soviet Union and now is 15 Independent States.

We, as a community, have tried very hard to be supportive, to work with other ethnic and religious minority groups, whether it was the Soviet Union or the Independent States today.

As Rabbi Goldschmidt has said and as David Harris has said, the fight against anti-Semitism is also the fight against intolerance and injustice for all in Russia. We will continue as a community not just to speak out in behalf of our own brothers and sisters in Russia but for those others who are also having difficulty. That is one reason we have worked so closely with you and others on the religious law that was passed in Russia as well as with the new

Round Table that has been created under the State Department's direction.

Senator SMITH. I think that has been very helpful.

I hope as we go down the road that you remember we did pass an amendment, called the Smith amendment, that conditions some of our aid to Russia to the whole issue of how this law in Russia on religious conscience and association is implemented.

I know the State Department has strong feelings about not suspending financial aid to Russia. On the other hand, this is such a threshold, as you say, barometric, issue. We have to make some tough calls fairly soon and we hope you will give us input because we have to be strong enough to play by the same rules if we are going to get anybody's attention.

If they are going to be violating Helsinki Agreements or other international commitments to religious tolerance, then there is no point in our trying to fund that kind of conduct or bail out efforts that manifest themselves in persecution to you or others of other faiths in Russia.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Chairman, if I may make just one brief comment, I think at the same time we have to continue to be supportive of those in the Russian Government who want to be helpful and cooperative. I think we need to be sensitive, as well, to the dilemma that they face in dealing with a legislature that does not want to see the creation of a more open and democratic society. It is a delicate balance and is something that, as a community, we try to be sensitive to in working with you and others in Congress, as well as the administration.

Senator SMITH. You have said it well. I could not say it better myself.

Senator Biden.

Senator BIDEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mark, you gave a very good nonanswer to the Jehovah's Witness question. I was surprised and maybe I could ask the Rabbi this question.

I have not heard of any—let me make sure I have the facts right. The law that the chairman talked about, and came to me a year ago asking me to help deal with it, the law that the Russian Duma passed, was a way to regulate “nontraditional” religious activity. It is, in a bizarre sense, noteworthy that Jews were not considered in that category and were treated as “traditional” for legislative purposes.

I do not recall hearing the Russian Jewish community respond with an organized voice. Maybe they were there; and, if so, it would be useful to have on the record that the Jewish community vocalized their opposition to this legislation or their opposition to the trial of the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Could you fill us in, Rabbi, on what happened?

Rabbi GOLDSCHMIDT. Sure. I think that my colleagues here do remember that I took an official open position against the law, the new law on religious freedom and conscience in Russia.

You are right, Senator, that there were different opinions in the community. Some others gave muted consent to this law because, in the end, it was the first law which officially recognized the Jewish religion and gave it a right of existence.

However, I think that the law is an ugly law and, in the end, everybody is going to suffer. All the different religions, even those religions mentioned in that law are going to suffer from it.

Senator BIDEN. I agree with you.

Rabbi GOLDSCHMIDT. This is because little bureaucrats in Novosibirsk and maybe other places are going to try to implement their personal agendas and try to place their own clergy people into positions of authority. I hope that one day the law will be changed.

Senator BIDEN. I compliment you, Rabbi, for your speaking out. The reason I bother to mention it is this, and I do not say this to be critical. I say it to underscore the fact that there is an incredible number of conflicting cross-currents that run not only in the Russian community but in the American community. I think that the old expression attributed to the Three Musketeers could be used here: one for all, all for one.

I think there is a need. I understand the dilemma. I remember speaking to some folks who had an interest in religious freedom and the point that you raised, Rabbi, was raised with me. "Joe," they said, "you have to understand that this is a dilemma for us." This is the first time Russia has ever officially recognized Judaism as a traditional religion. It puts us in a dilemma.

Now, I am not suggesting that Russian Jews thought this was a good law. I am not suggesting that.

What I am suggesting is that there is a burden on us—not on Russian Jews. The burden is on us to speak out equally about oppression of all faiths.

I know you understand that, Rabbi, and you spoke out in Russia, which is a heck of a lot different, and a lot harder than what we can do here from behind this protected podium.

I want to move from that to make another point. But first, did you want to make a comment?

Rabbi GOLDSCHMIDT. Senator, with your permission, I would like to dwell a little bit on one of the reasons why this law was enacted.

Senator BIDEN. Please.

Rabbi GOLDSCHMIDT. I do not defend the law. I mention this in an article which I wrote pending the acceptance of this law.

I was inaugurated as the Rabbi of Moscow in 1990. It was right after Simchat Torah, which was the main Jewish festival, where tens of thousands of Jews gathered on Arkhipova Street.

The Saturday afterwards, in the middle of the religious service in the synagogue, in the main synagogue of Moscow with hundreds of people, one American missionary entered the synagogue during the service, sat in the front row, and started passing leaflets, missionary leaflets, which were being given out to worshippers.

Now I believe that every religion has the right to proselytize, to advertise, to talk. However, there are certain things which were done, especially by foreign religious communities, which create very strong feelings within the Russian religions. Again, it is not a defense of the law.

Senator BIDEN. I understand.

Rabbi GOLDSCHMIDT. But I think this has to be understood.

Mr. HARRIS. Senator Biden, if I may for the record give you a very explicit answer to the question that Chairman Smith asked, the American Jewish Committee from the beginning condemned

the draft law. We went to the Kremlin in June, 1997. We met with Boris Yeltsin's Chief of Staff. We pressed for rejection of the law based on the fact that it would create a hierarchy of religions, first of all, and the exclusion of a number of religions altogether. And we have stated clearly since then that those excluded religious groups, including the Jehovah's Witnesses, cannot be ignored in this process. To the contrary, their concerns must be addressed and must find support in the Jewish community.

Senator BIDEN. I know that. I don't question that. I am just trying to say that I think it is important we understand the complexity of what we are dealing with here.

This, in no way, suggests that we should cease and desist. It only suggests that it should be understood, Rabbi, as it is by you, in Russia, among Russian Jews, that, even though the historical object of persecution has been your religion, there are a number of people who feel equally strongly about the past and recent persecution, rejection, or isolation of Christian organizations.

I have no doubt that there were a number of people offended when someone came in during the middle of a religious ceremony and proselytized about how they would be much happier being a Christian. I don't have any doubt about that.

I am just suggesting to you that—well, I am not suggesting anything. I am just making a larger point, that this is a very complicated subject.

This leads me to the second point I wanted to raise, which is this. Among your colleagues, among the rabbinate in Moscow and Russia, and among, if there is such a thing—because there is no average anybody—among the average Jew in Moscow, what is the sense of peril they feel? Do they walk down the street thinking that they are about to become the object of the attention of the government in ways similar to those of their grandfathers and grandmothers? Or do they think this is an aberration, that the Zyuganovs of the world and others are an aberration, one to be concerned about, and to condemn, but not to really worry about?

Give us a description, as best you can, of how you think it translates to the people who worship with you in your synagogue.

Rabbi GOLDSCHMIDT. You know, there is the famous Russian anecdote that goes like this: What is the difference between an optimist and a pessimist? The pessimist says things are so bad that they cannot get any worse. The optimist says no, they are not so bad, they still can get worse.

I think that the best way to check these attitudes is by way of checking on the lines in front of the Israeli Embassy or in front of the American Embassy, the number of people wanting to emigrate.

There has been quite a rise in emigration to Israel.

Senator BIDEN. There has been a rise?

Rabbi GOLDSCHMIDT. There has been. Compared to the same quarter of last year, there has been an increase of about 80 percent. In some cities there has been 300 percent or 400 percent more interest in going to Israel. In Moscow itself it has risen about 60 percent.

There is a very interesting dispute between generations. The older generation does not like so much our proactive, very strong approach against anti-Semites. They lived under Stalin and they

bent their heads and survived that time. They said let's keep our silence and this wave will eventually wash over us and we will continue to live here. But the young generation in our community believes that we have to fight this new tendency to the end.

Just to add another suggestion to Chairman Smith's question of how to approach this problem, I think if there will be direct communication between the Attorney General of the United States and the Prosecutor General's office in Russia regarding law enforcement, enforcement against racial incitement, I think this would further very much the enforcement of these anti-racist laws.

Senator BIDEN. Mr. Harris, in the polling you did, did you find any distinction among Russians, based upon whether they were in urban areas or rural areas, in terms of their response to questions relating to their feeling of, or their observation of, or their concern for anti-Semitism?

Mr. HARRIS. In fact, Senator Biden, as elsewhere where we do polling on anti-Semitism, there is a very consistent pattern that applies to Russia. Generally speaking, older, less well educated, and more rural respondents, whether in Russia or, for that matter, in Europe or here in the United States, tend to express more anti-Semitic views or more intolerant views generally—

Senator BIDEN. That would be what I would expect.

Mr. HARRIS [continuing]. Than younger, better educated, and more urban respondents.

Senator BIDEN. The appeal that the Communist Party has the most fertile fields upon which their message falls is among those very people—at least if you look at it from the standpoint of electioneering. That is the base from which most of those interested in the party come, although there are notable exceptions.

Were you going to say something, Rabbi?

Rabbi GOLDSCHMIDT. The Communist appeal goes mostly to the elderly people. However, the nationalist appeal goes also to young people.

Senator BIDEN. Yes. That is my next question, and then I will stop.

Is there any way to distinguish—how can I phrase this? If you are a Russian politician seeking not the Presidency but any office, whether it is a seat in the Duma or whether it is to be mayor of a small or large town, the Governor of a province; is it a universally accepted notion that it is a "vote getter" to appeal to anti-Semitism? For example, if I could make an analogy, I grew up in a State that was segregated by law. I got involved in politics for two reasons—civil rights and the Holocaust. They were the two things that drove me to think that politics is what I should do with my life.

When I was growing up, and when you were growing up—though I am a little older than you—the South, the American South was a place where it was a universally accepted notion, particularly in rural districts in the South, that if you were hard on the race issue, it was beneficial to you politically. It was an accepted notion.

Has it reached the level in this emerging and hopefully democratic nation, that when you make a direct appeal to voters, it is thought to be clearly beneficial to make this appeal to anti-Semitism—that is, in terms of getting votes, just the raw politics of get-

ting votes? Or when it is discussed in Russia, among Russian politicians and Russian citizens, is it viewed as being a mixed bag?

I am not phrasing this very well, but do you understand what I am trying to get at here?

Would any of you want to venture an opinion on that?

Mr. HARRIS.

Mr. HARRIS. I am going to exhibit a characteristic Jewish trait by first answering your question with a kind of rhetorical question.

I would, if I could, rephrase the question, Senator, and ask whether there is political capital in Russia today in anti-anti-Semitism. I am not sure that the answer to that question is yes.

This does not necessarily mean, therefore, that there is political capital for every party in every corner of Russia or in its provinces for an openly anti-Semitic campaign. I don't believe that.

Senator BIDEN. Well, in typical Irish Catholic fashion, I would respond by saying that I cannot think of any time in American history where there has been any political capital in any anti-anti-prejudice. I can think of no place where anyone has ever run and won who has had anti-anti-segregation, anti-anti-Semitism, anti-anti-Catholicism, or anti-anti-anything as his or her major initiative.

My colleague just whispered something and I believe he is wrong. He said what about against David Duke in Louisiana. No, that was wrong. That example merely related to raising a whole lot of money and embarrassing the State in my view.

My point is this. I really think that hardly any place ever passes that test. But is it something where it is viewed as something that you gain by, by doing it?

Mr. HARRIS. Well, if I may just finish the sentence—and I know the Rabbi wants to enter into this—I believe that for the forces of democracy in Russia, there is no capital in this and that, ultimately; therefore, this becomes a referendum on democracy itself rather than letting it become a referendum on the Jews.

I don't think, for example, that it serves our purposes to let it become a referendum on the Jews or anti-Semitism.

Senator BIDEN. Oh, I don't either. I am not suggesting that.

Mr. HARRIS. Nor am I suggesting that that is what you are suggesting. I am simply saying that, from our point of view, for those candidates who believe in democracy, and who believe in trying to insure the irreversibility of what happened in 1991—

Senator BIDEN. There are very few of those folks.

Mr. HARRIS [continuing]. There is no capital in anti-Semitism for them.

Senator BIDEN. Right.

Mr. HARRIS. For the others, it ranges, I believe, on the spectrum from indifference to outright espousal of anti-Semitism, and that is where the danger zone exists.

Senator BIDEN. I will cease, Mr. Chairman, but let me just say what I was trying to get at.

I am trying to figure out not whether or not we should speak out, not whether or not we should move, even if it is only a single voice in all of Russia appealing to a history of anti-Semitism, but, rather, what is the depth of the feeling?

We notoriously, and constantly, conduct polls in the United States of America. When there is a black candidate on the Republican or Democratic ticket we find that voters lie to us. If you have a poll where there is a black American candidate, in either party, running 10 or 12 points ahead on the eve of his or her election against a non-black candidate, every pollster will tell you to cut that in half. This is because people on the phone do not say, "yes, you are right, I have a problem voting for a black man." It is not socially chic to be anti-anything these days in America. So they will say "no, I am for so-and-so."

But I cannot think of any place where a black candidate has ever run equal to what his polling numbers have been.

Conversely, if a white politician on the eve of an election asks a good polling organization—and you know the good ones as you use them—it comes out usually pretty darn close to the election results.

I am wondering how accurate this polling data is about Russians saying they do not have a problem. That is why I was trying to figure out other ways—and I have been very imprecise in searching for them—to sense the depth of the currency in dealing with, in calling up the bogeyman of anti-Semitism as a rallying point, as a unifying point, as a way to get support and votes.

I will end there. If you want to comment, that's fine.

Mr. LEVIN. I would but very briefly.

If you look at the last election, in many ways Russians are no different than Americans and others in various countries when it comes to responding to pollsters or surveys.

There were a number of candidates who we would consider beyond the pale who were not supposed to do very well. In fact, they did do well.

If you look at the Presidential figures of the last election, it was like the stock market of a few months ago. It was up and down. I think that is also going to continue.

Also, we are dealing with a country where in some ways polling surveys are relatively new.

Mr. HARRIS. And still untrusted.

Mr. LEVIN. You know, they think: what is going to happen if I answer a question in a certain way? I think it is going to take a number of years before we get beyond that.

Senator, just to finish up very quickly, our concern as a community is the same: how deep does this go and how will it be utilized by different politicians?

I think the Rabbi can speak to this better, but it varies from region to region in Russia. I think there are areas that we, as a country, can concentrate on. There are areas that are virulently nationalistic and who send some of the worst politicians to the Duma. There are others that are more progressive and then there are some that are in the middle.

I think we need to begin to look at those regions that are straddling and try to find them out and try to help those who want to move in a positive direction.

Senator BIDEN. For example, it would be nice to know—I have a theory, I have a view, though I cannot sustain it—of why Yeltsin the second time around felt compelled to say something. Did he feel compelled to say something because we were responding? Did he

feel compelled to say something because he thought, from an electoral standpoint, it made him look like more of a democrat and helped him? Why did he feel compelled to respond? What was the reason?

I don't expect anybody to have the answer to these questions. But I think it matters in terms of the efficacy of what we are able to do, not whether we should speak out, not whether we should condemn, not whether we should consider sanctions, but how. The ultimate dilemma we have here is going to be this.

For example, I have introduced the Russian Democratization Assistance Act of 1999. We always give bills such fancy titles. The bottom line is I think one of the ways to deal with anti-Semitism is to go along with what the polls say, that the more educated you are, the less likely you are to be anti-Semitic. Therefore, the more open people are and the more exposure they have to the West, and the more students you have from Russia in the United States going to universities, the more exchanges we have, I think that is one small, tiny way in which to do this. But that runs head on into what my instinct is, which is if you are going to engage in this rabid anti-Semitism, I don't want to deal with you, I am going to cutoff any assistance, I am going to cutoff aid.

It is the dilemma you pointed out, Mark.

And so, in order to be able to act as an intelligent, and in my view, as a responsible legislator, and make the judgment whether to use the carrot or the stick, it is important to know—and I do not know—whether or not it is deep, how pervasive it is, and whether or not there are alternatives that exposure in Russia generates.

I will end with this. For example, a friend of ours from Texas is Senator Gramm, a very conservative fellow and a good friend of mine. We were debating 8 years ago the crime bill. We would go at each other pretty well on the issue.

One day I slipped and called him in public what I jokingly called him in private—"Barbed Wire Gramm." This is because of prevention programs, and I saw him wanting more "barbed wire." I joked with him about it. I slipped on the floor and said one day "Barbed Wire Gramm," and I immediately apologized.

Well, he said on the floor no, there was no need to apologize.

Afterwards, he told me off the floor and, subsequently, publicly has said look, that helps me, coming from you.

Now, it may very well. What I am trying to figure is the politics of this, how it works in Russia, in order to give me some insight into whether or not withholding or engaging is more likely to bring about the result that you have dedicated your life to and that we are committed to.

I don't expect an answer. I was just trying to explain why I was asking these questions.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator SMITH. Go ahead, if you have a comment.

Rabbi GOLDSCHMIDT. I will try to be very short in my answer. Every politician wants to get elected eventually. Definitely anti-Semitism, as has been shown in the past, will let you gather a certain segment of the population to vote for you.

Now the problem is that, since Russia is going through a crisis, politicians are basically trying to get elected by saying, I would like to make your life better than it is right now. There are a few ways of doing that. There is one way of doing that which says, for example, which some liberal politicians will say: we are going to take care of the economy. We are going to rebuild the social welfare structure.

Some nationalists will say we will get the Soviet fleet in the Crimea back to Russia. And some others will say let's get the Jews out of Russia.

So every politician who will think of using an anti-Semitic platform always has to weigh the pros and the cons.

If the rabid anti-Semitic politician knows that by making these statements, first of all, he will not be a member of any committee within the parliament, he will not be invited to any reception of any foreign embassy in Moscow, that when he wants to visit the United States or any other European country he will not get a visa, this will make a politician think twice or three times before he will use anti-Semitism or any other kind of rabid racism against Caucasians or against other minorities. He will have to weigh the pros and cons of doing so.

I don't think that the average person, whether in Novosibirsk or any other far out-reaching region in the far east, where they are struggling, will want to elect a Governor who cannot travel to any other country.

Mr. HARRIS. Could I also just make a closing comment, Mr. Chairman?

Senator SMITH. Certainly.

Mr. HARRIS. First, I wonder if, in addition to my full submitted statement, I might submit to you the results of our 1996 survey and have that included as part of our submission.

Senator SMITH. It is so ordered.

[The information referred to has been retained in the committee files.]

Mr. HARRIS. Second, I would like to emphasize what has been stated here and what I sought to state in my opening comments. One of the reasons we need to take so seriously the current situation is because it comes against a backdrop of, literally, hundreds of years of a pattern of persecution. I indicated some instances in my fuller submission, but we have seen a pattern and, therefore, it behooves us to take very seriously what is going on against the backdrop of that historical context.

Third, Mark Levin will remember that in the early 1980's, there were bilateral wheat talks going on. One of those talks took place in London.

We had spoken with the U.S. negotiator prior to his travel to London for those talks. We spoke to him about the Soviet Jewry issue. At the time, emigration was virtually nonexistent.

He, in the course of the talks during a recess, took aside his Soviet counterpart and said to the Soviet counterpart: I want you to know of the great concern about the Soviet Jewry issue in the United States and how important this is to Americans of all faiths. The Russian counterpart, without missing a beat, looked him in the eye and said to him: Sir, does this affect our wheat talks?

The American blinked and said: It does not, but I wanted you to know about the concern in any case.

In a sense, I have always remembered the exchange because in that moment the American blinked. What I am suggesting, Senator Biden, is that we have to fashion an approach which strengthens Russian democracy, which strengthens the institution of civil society, but which at the same time has zero tolerance in the government or the institutions of the country for anti-Semitism.

We may never be able to extinguish entirely anti-Semitism, neither there nor anywhere else. But we have to make clear that in our bilateral dealings we will not accept anti-Semitism as part of the framework of mainstream society.

Senator BIDEN. Mr. Chairman, if I may interrupt, the question here is how do you measure that. Do you measure that in the statements of individual politicians who do not hold national office? Or do you measure it in terms of legislation actually passed and condoned?

Let me give you an example. You were of great help and one of the best statements delivered on the expansion of NATO was by you in front of this committee.

Mr. HARRIS. Thank you.

Senator BIDEN. I, prior to the time we pushed this through, went to Poland. I met with everyone in Poland about expansion. I was asked to speak at the University of Warsaw. I spoke to a large crowd comprised of mostly intellectuals and professors. It was a very large crowd. The audience was made up of all who were enthusiastically supportive of the expansion of NATO and Poland's inclusion. I was asked the question, as one of the lead people on this issue. And not because I am so smart or anything—I was pushing the issue, I was asked with all the Polish media there and CNN, the following question: Is there anything that could stop our admission?

I said yes, there is one thing—the rise of anti-Semitism in Poland and the insensitivity that was expressed in the last government. Then I named the issues.

Well, they were absolutely offended and outraged and stunned that I would say that. But immediately after that, you heard a number of enunciations. You never heard so many pro-Jewish statements coming out of Poland before. I mean this.

Now, you know the area.

Mr. HARRIS. I do.

Senator BIDEN. So I understand your point. But I think you are missing mine.

My point is this. Let me give you this example. Let's assume that there is no question that General—and I always mispronounce his name, the anti-Semite—

Mr. HARRIS. Makashov.

Senator BIDEN [continuing]. Makashov, who is not running for President, there is no question that you can gain a constituency in Russia that can keep you in the Duma, by appealing to raw anti-Semitism, and make you a national figure. There is Lepin in France. We could name certain folks on different subjects in Israel. We could name them in the United States. We could name them all over the world.

So there is no question that you can be an anti-Semite, an anti-Catholic, an anti-black, an anti-Asian, an anti-anything, and find a constituency like we find on the media now. All you have to do now is get 1.2 percent of the market, and you can keep some of these stupid programs on television.

I'm serious, because there are 200 of them. I am not joking. This is an economic fact of life.

A political fact of life is you can have someone like the general in fact survive in a country where there may only be a small percentage of people who are buying on to his message, but he will stay in power in his office.

What if God came down and said look, I can guarantee you here is the deal: this is not a repeat of the past 500 years; this is not the beginning of the past; so speak out against it, talk about it, but do not condemn the whole country because you will find a backlash. The backlash would be that you are assigning, ascribing to the whole country the views of this one anti-Semite. He or she is in power but represents only a distinct minority.

I think it is much worse than that, by the way. But that would lead you to one conclusion as a policymaker.

If, on the other hand, you reach the conclusion that just bubbling beneath the surface was this almost yearning to return to the days of pogroms, literally and figuratively, that would be a totally different prescription one would come to as a policymaker.

So I think we need to do two things. One is to speak out, even if it is only one person. I pointed out to my double doctor staff person here, Dr. Haltzel, who has forgotten more about this subject than I know, a very simple thing. He has a memo here where he says to me: and you know what, they did not condemn what he said and the Duma did not stop him from saying it. I pointed out that he could say the same thing in the United States and the first amendment would say that he can say it.

So if our test is, if you say it and it is not condemned or declared illegal, we don't have laws like you have, Rabbi. It is not a question of immunity in our Duma. Any American can go out there and hold a press conference and say, by the way, I think every Jew is a Yid and I think every such and such. He would be protected by free speech. You know that and I know that.

So the measure here is what I am trying to get at. It is clear to me that when you put Jehovah's Witnesses on trial you have crossed the line. It is clear to me when you pass a law that says only certain religions can be recognized that you have crossed the line.

We can quantify this.

It is also clear to me that, when the President of a country makes assertions or a national figure makes anti-Semitic or racial assertions, we should say you are not welcome here. But I think we have to build a case as to what the measure is, that we are going to use, to determine when we do not trade, when we do not continue to participate economically, when we stop having joint exercises, when we do all the things that are the things that flow from using the stick here.

I think that is a different measure. So I don't want to be confused here. We should speak out. I will speak out. We should do

this. For the next step, as to when you take aggressive action—which I believe is close by, by the way, me, personally—I want to be able to make the case differently than that I identify 2, 5, 10, 20 politicians in the Duma who make these outrageous statements.

We need to build a case. Maybe there is too much of the lawyer in me.

Anyway, that is what I was driving at.

Senator SMITH. Thank you, Senator.

Are there any concluding comments from anyone?

Mr. LEVIN. Senator, I think I can speak for my colleagues to say thank you again. There is a struggle going on now in Russia, a struggle for the soul of that vast middle and in which direction they will go. I don't think we, let alone anyone else, has the answer. But what I can say for certain is that we, as a country, need to speak, speak out, speak out forcefully, and work with those elements in the Russian society who want to see their country move forward. We will continue to do that.

Senator BIDEN. I want to thank you again, Mr. Chairman.

Senator SMITH. I thank you, Senator.

Senator BIDEN. Our silence would be deafening and you are preventing that from happening.

Senator SMITH. Well, we will keep speaking, keep holding hearings, keep working with you to make sure that this barometer does not get any more emblematic of storm clouds on the horizon. We want to drive those away.

Thank you all. We are adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:50 p.m., the subcommittee adjourned.]

APPENDIX

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. JOSEPH R. BIDEN, JR.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to begin by thanking you for holding this hearing. As you demonstrated last year in your efforts to convince the Russian State Duma to amend its law on officially approved religions, your own actions are guided by a firm moral compass. I applaud your continuing engagement against persecution wherever it may occur.

To some people the topic of anti-Semitism in Russia might not seem a likely one for this subcommittee's first hearing in the 106th Congress. But you know, and I know, that over the centuries the phenomenon of anti-Semitism has become a sickening metaphor for man's inhumanity to man and, thus, a topic of universal significance.

Sad to say, anti-Semitism has a long history in Russia. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the Tsarist government forced the vast majority of the Jewish population of imperial Russia to live in an area called the "Pale of Settlement" in what is now eastern Poland and southwestern Russia.

High ranking government officials blamed the Jews for the assassination of Tsar Alexander II in 1881, and in the succeeding decades officially tolerated, well-armed gangs called the "Black Hundreds" carried out murderous pogroms against the defenseless Jewish population.

The anti-Semites also added clever propaganda to their arsenal. In 1903, elements of the Tsarist secret police concocted a fraudulent document entitled "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion," ostensibly reporting discussions among Jewish elders of plans to subvert Christian civilization and erect a world Zionist state. The "Protocols" were translated into several languages and widely disseminated and—sad to say—widely believed. They were finally exposed as forgeries in 1921 by The Times of London, but they remain a staple of anti-Semitic propaganda to this day.

The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 gave hope of equal treatment for all nationalities, including the Jews. Given the persecution the Jews had endured under the Tsars, it was not surprising that several of the original Bolshevik leaders were of Jewish origin.

Unfortunately, Joseph Stalin, the winner in the power struggle after Lenin's death, came to embrace anti-Semitism among his many pathologies. Ukrainians—millions of whom perished in Stalin's collectivization of agriculture—bore the brunt of the dictator's insane policies.

Soviet Jews were singled out for harsh, if less genocidal persecution. When Stalin died in March 1953, he seems to have been preparing anti-Semitic show trials as a follow-on to his transparently preposterous "Doctors' Plot" allegation. According to that bit of grotesque Jew-baiting, a group of medical doctors, most of them Jewish, had been paid by the United States to get rid of Soviet politicians.

Mr. Chairman, the history of Jewish life in Russia has certainly not been an exclusively negative one. In this century Russian Jews have distinguished themselves in the professions, in government service, in the military, in science, music, and the arts and letters. According to public opinion data, a majority of the ethnic Russian population is not anti-Semitic. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union there has, in fact, been a renaissance of Jewish religious and cultural life in several Russian cities.

It is, therefore, distressing to learn of the recent upsurge in anti-Semitic scapegoating in Russia.

Last November, one Albert Makashov, a retired communist general and leader of the 1993 rebellion against the legally elected government of Boris Yeltsin, blamed Russia's economic collapse on, in his words, the "yids." Such a statement, even from a communist dinosaur, is appalling, but perhaps even more shameful was the attitude of the State Duma, which refused to repudiate it. In fact, Gennadi Zyuganov,

leader of the Communist Party, elaborated on the theme with the following pithy analysis:

“Zionism has in reality revealed itself as one of the varieties of the theory and practice of the most aggressive imperialistic circles striving for world supremacy.”

I wish Mr. Zyuganov had made these remarks before I met with him in Moscow two years ago.

Not to be outdone, Alexander Lukashenko, the neo-fascist head-case who runs Belarus, charged that Jewish financiers and political reformers—imagine that, political reformers—were responsible for the creation of the criminal economy.

Perhaps most unbelievably, in a country where twenty-seven million citizens perished as a result of Hitler’s invasion and massacres, an avowedly fascist party, called Russian National Unity, complete with black uniforms and Nazi salute, has appeared on the scene.

All this pathetic scapegoating, Mr. Chairman, certainly casts a pall over our relations with Russia.

But we must persevere. In that spirit, I have just introduced the “Russian Democratization Assistance Act of 1999.” This legislation would significantly expand selected existing educational and professional exchanges with Russia and explore the creation of a Russian foundation for democracy.

This anti-Semitic filth, in a sense, makes it more important than ever to “let the sun shine in” and expose the next generation of Russians to democracy and mutual understanding.

Depending on differing data, there are still between 600,000 and a million-and-a-half Jews in Russia, and they must, once again, cope with the forces of darkness. Perhaps a stand by the United States Senate against this renewed anti-Semitism will be of help to them and to Russia as a whole. I hope that this hearing is the first step on that road.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LEONARD GLICKMAN

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) is the international migration agency of the American Jewish community for the rescue and resettlement of refugees and immigrants. Since its founding in 1880, HIAS has assisted in the resettlement of more than four million Jewish and non-Jewish refugees from all over the world in the United States and elsewhere. In recent years, under contract with the Department of State, this agency’s efforts have been focused primarily upon assisting Jewish refugees from the former Soviet Union (FSU) escape from a threatening environment to reunite with family members in this country.

HIAS wishes to express its appreciation to the Subcommittee for the timeliness of this hearing and for the opportunity to convey our concern for the protection of Jews and other minorities in Russia. We would also like to bring to your attention the perplexing development that, as anti-Semitism and intolerance have dramatically increased in Russia in the last few months, so have the denial rates of Jewish applicants applying to the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) for refugee status in Moscow.

To view the human rights situation for Jews in Russia today, it is crucial to begin with their historical experience, for it is through this prism that the Jewish population views itself, and others view them. The deeply rooted beliefs that prompted the persecution and killing of Jews in Tsarist Russia, through the anti-Semitic campaigns of the Stalinist and Khrushchev eras, are not as easily swept aside as political leaders and institutions, and persist whether officially sanctioned or not.

For over three hundred years, the Jewish population in the former Soviet Union has been seen as the other, or the scapegoat, at both the governmental and grass-roots level—particularly in times of political, economic and social upheaval. It is in the context of this historical reality and the current dramatic deterioration in Russia that we view with increasing concern the recent expression of hatred toward Jews by government officials and others.

The increasingly hostile situation faced by religious and ethnic minorities in Russia caused the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) to convene a hearing on the subject on January 11. The CSCE hearing record is replete with statements and news articles clearly indicating that, while President Yeltsin has made some attempt to address neo-fascism and anti-Semitism in Russia, leading local and national officials continue to make public statements blaming the current crises on Jews and other vulnerable minorities.

For example, politicians such as Parliamentarian Albert Makashov, Communist Part leader Gennady Zyuganov, and Krasnodar Region Governor Kondratenko openly, and without rebuke, blame “Zionists,” “Yids,” and “Jews” for the decline of Russia. In a statement submitted to the Commission, the White House expressed that it “has been outraged by the recent spike in anti-Semitic statements by leading Russian politicians” Moreover, witnesses at the hearing, including Dr. Yelena Bonner (Chair of the Andrei Sakharov Foundation) and Ludmilla Alexeyeva (Chair, Moscow Helskinki Group), both lamented that there is no “rule of law” in Russia to protect vulnerable ethnic minorities and refugees. Indeed, the hearing record contains numerous reports of increasing incidents of crimes—which go uninvestigated, unsolved and unpunished—targeting Jews and other ethnic minorities.

More specifically, in the last few months, members of the Russian Parliament have made openly racist and anti-Semitic statements that were purposefully not admonished by that body: “Jews should be rounded up and jailed,” and “It’s time to expel all ‘yids’ from Russia” are comments from Parliamentarian Albert Makashov, who has also called on the government to restore quotas on the number of Jews who can live in Russia. In other parts of Russia, pamphlets have been widely distributed calling for Jews to be expelled and to “annihilate the ‘kikes’.” Mark Albrecht of the World Evangelical Fellowship reports that the situation is potentially explosive and reflects “dangerous demagoguery.” And, it is not only those of Jewish origin who are subjected to such treatment. For a considerable time now, individuals and families of “darker skin” from the Caucasus area have been indiscriminately rounded up in Moscow on unfounded grounds of suspicion of terrorism. Moscow authorities have also consistently demonstrated open hostility toward third world refugees and asylum seekers, including subjecting them to extortion, beatings, destruction of UNHCR documents, and summary deportations.

We are disturbed that, as anti-Semitism and intolerance have dramatically increased in Russia in the last few months, so have the denial rates of Lautenberg category applicants applying to INS for refugee status in Moscow. In fact, the denial rate of Jews applying for refugee status, which ranged from 3% to 6% from FY1990 to FY1996, jumped to 11% in FY1997, then to 30% for the first half of FY1998, and has now soared to almost 50%. Moreover, requests for reconsideration (appeals), submitted to INS by applicants who have been denied refugee status, are generally taking more than one year for INS to adjudicate.

In 1989, after a policy change caused a similar dramatic increase in the denial rate of Soviet Jews and Evangelical Christians applying for refugee status through the program, Congress responded by including the “Lautenberg Amendment” in the 1990 Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill (P.L. 101–167, Section 599D). This legislation required the Immigration & Naturalization Service (INS) to take into account, when adjudicating refugee claims, the longstanding history of persecution faced by certain groups, including Jews from the USSR. The Lautenberg Amendment basically restored the earlier policy for adjudicating refugee applications from Soviet Jews, and most of the applications which had been denied by INS were reopened and reversed. Originally set to expire in September of 1990, the Lautenberg Amendment has been extended through September 30, 1999.

The INS claims the sudden increase in denial rates is not due to any policy change. Yet they have not been able to explain why, as anti-Semitism has intensified in the FSU, the denial rate for Jews applying to the United States for refugee status has soared in recent months from around ten percent to nearly fifty percent. HIAS urges the Congress to extend the Lautenberg Amendment beyond September 30, 1999, and hopes you will join us to hold INS accountable for implementing the Amendment and carrying out the letter and spirit of the refugee program—to rescue those in harm’s way and to protect others who have a well founded fear of persecution.

Thank you.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RABBI PINCHAS GOLDSCHMIDT

Honorable Chairman:

I would like to thank the U.S. Senate and the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, the Hon. Senator Jesse Helms, as well as the subcommittee chairman Senator Gordon Smith, for inviting me to testify on behalf of the Jewish community in the Russian Federation.

I have been privileged to serve the Russian Jewish Community during the last ten years as the rabbi of Moscow, and since the organization of the Russian Jewish

Congress I have been responsible for foreign relations of the organized Jewish community of Russia, the Russian Jewish Congress.

The Russian Jewish Congress has been established in 1996 by a joint initiative of the spiritual and financial leaders of our community and has over forty-eight branches in all of Russia. It is the prime umbrella group of the estimated over one million Russian Jews and is dealing with fundraising, political representation, anti-defamation, and the development of the community. If I would draw a parallel to the United States, I could say that it is a combination of a "Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish American Organizations" and the "United Jewish Appeal". The head of the Russian Jewish Congress is its president, Mr. Vladimir Goussinsky, a well-known business tycoon and a champion of the free press.

The Russian Jewish Congress has had some major achievements during the few years of its existence. First of all, it united the whole community, secular as religious. Secondly, it became a powerful voice within Russia against anti-Semitism and for democracy. At the inaugural of the Holocaust Memorial Synagogue on Victory Hill in Moscow during the early days of September last year, President Boris Yeltsin attended the ceremonies. He was the first Russian Head of State to attend a Jewish event during this century. Nevertheless as time has progressed we experienced a new wave of anti-Semitism as presented in the following paragraphs. However, for the first time there was a strong response within Russia, from its Jewish community and subsequently from the Russian government.

INTRODUCTION

Faltering political and economic conditions in Russia today have brought fear and uncertainty to much of the population. President Yeltsin's poor health and the frequent change of prime ministers have led to a general lack of confidence in the government. At the same time, nationalist groups and the Communist party appear to be gaining strength.

Due to the Asian crisis and by failing to implement needed economic reforms, the government has permitted both the financial and political crises to persist. The August 1998 devaluation of Russia's monetary unit, the ruble, sank the exchange rate and caused many Russians to lose their savings. It also attached a tremendous price tag on imports, including food and other consumer goods. The emergency measure of printing excess money to pay back wages and pensions also caused inflation and frustration among the population to soar. Meanwhile, a bad harvest this year—considered the worst in decades—has Russians concerned about food supplies lasting throughout the winter.

The worsening of the economy and the rise of political anti-Semitism did cause a sharp rise of emigration to Israel. Mrs. Alla Levy, the representative of the Jewish Agency for Israel in Moscow, reported an increase of 80%, compared to the same period last year, a result of fear of mounting anti-Semitism.

ANTI-SEMITISM OF THE LEFT

The Communist Party to a large extent engineered the resurgence of political mainstream anti-Semitism after the crisis of August 17th. The KPRF (Communist Party of the Russian Federation) under the leadership of Mr. Gennady Zyuganov has sought to use the fact that some ministers in the last government were of Jewish descent to blame the economic crisis on the Jews. This tendency towards anti-Semitism and racism can be understood in the wider context of the transformation of the communist parties of Eastern Europe, which had to find new political platforms. While most communist parties in central and Eastern Europe have evolved in general to the social democratic model or to other forms of left wing activism, in Russia, the communist party has turned to nationalism which in fact makes it a National Socialist party.

The right wing of the party, represented by General Albert Makashov¹ and Mr. Victor Ilyuchin², accused the Jews of genocide against the people of Russia³. When liberal lawmakers tried to censure Makashov on November the 4th, the KPRF with one exception defended Makashov's statements.⁴ In reaction to General Makashov's October comments and the Duma's failure to censure him, President Yeltsin requested a statement from Communist Party Leader Gennady Zyuganov regarding his party's position on anti-Semitism. Mr. Zyuganov's response reiterated the accusations made by the most anti-Semitic members of his party. In the form of a letter to the Ministry of Justice and the National Security⁵ Chief, Zyuganov's response contained harsh anti-Semitic references reminiscent of the old Soviet era and served only to heighten concerns about anti-Semitism in Russia. Zyuganov stated⁶ that he believes "that too many people with strange sounding family names mingle in the

internal affairs of Russia”, a clear reference to the powerful Jews in the economy and in the government.

On the local level, Mr. Kondratenko, the governor of Krasnodar, a ranking member of the KPRF, has voiced open anti-Semitic statements against the “Jewish-Masonic conspiracy”⁷. Following that, leaflets were being handed out in Krasnodar, calling for a pogrom against the Jews⁸. The proliferation of radical anti-Semitic racist literature and journals in Russia is growing. This literature was available in the not so recent past at any metro station in Moscow, however, Lushkov responded with a crackdown on the dissemination of fascist symbolism in the city arresting transgressors and confiscating material. In other areas of the Russian Federation anti-Semitic material is readily available on the streets.

Mr. Vladimir Goussinsky, President of the Russian Jewish Congress, the umbrella group of all Jewish organizations in Russia, has addressed himself to the Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation, Mr. Yuri Skuratov, asking him to initiate criminal proceedings against Governor Kondratenko and Duma Deputy Makashov. The senior advisor of the Prosecutor General, Mr. Y. Zacharov, answered in his letter of the 28th December 1998 that an expert commission would have to analyze the nature of the statements of Makashov. The commission is to be comprised of members of the Russian Academy of Sciences, historians, psychologists, sociologists, linguist and philologists. The letter further states that after having been investigated, Makashov denied that he had made threats against the Jewish community, denied incitement of racism and of religious intolerance, just the opposite he stated, he had received many threatening phone-calls himself. A similar letter was received from the General Prosecutor’s office regarding Governor Kondratenko of Krasnodar. Up until today the government as not initiated proceedings against the governor.

ANTI-SEMITISM ON THE RIGHT

The rise of the Neo-Nazi movement is also worrisome. On the far right of the political spectrum, Barkashov’s “Russian National Unity”⁹ with thousands¹⁰ of paramilitary troops¹¹ gives much cause for concern. They planned to hold their annual convention in Moscow, but Moscow Mayor Yuri Lushkov¹² banned the meeting¹³, and fired a police official who failed to break up a march of the Russian National Unity movement¹⁴. Interior Minister Sergei Stepashin said he would sack chiefs of police departments if they did not oppose neo-Nazi rallies and demonstrations.¹⁵ President Boris Yeltzin has repeatedly denounced anti-Semitism and formed a special commission to fight the rise of anti-Semitism in the country.¹⁶

The Moscow prosecutor’s office did revise its earlier decision and opened criminal proceedings against Barkashov, who had voiced threats against Mayor Yuri Luzhkov. On the other hand communist deputies in the Duma have railroaded the motion to prohibit the use of Nazi symbolism, which are used by fascist groups.

VIOLENCE

Besides incidents involving the desecration of cemeteries and the attacks of skinheads against religious Jews in the Moscow area, we can pinpoint the following recent events which unsettled the feeling of security of the Jewish community:

- October 15, in Nizhny Novgorod, a city only recently seen as a stronghold of liberal government, Chief Rabbi Zalman Yoffe was severely beaten by unknown assailants; no arrests have been made.
- November 19, in St. Petersburg, Ms. Galina Staravoitova was assassinated, startling Russia and human rights activists worldwide. She was one of the leading voices of democracy in Russia and a true friend to the Jewish community. She herself was married to a Jew. In fact, shortly before her death, she aggressively spoke out against General Makashov’s rhetoric and criticized her colleagues for their failure to censure him. While there is no evidence that her murder was an act of anti-Semitism, it indeed underscores the political chaos and rampant, unchecked corruption raging through Russia today. During her funeral in St. Petersburg, the nationalist, anti-Semitic group “The Black Hundreds” marched in front of the parliament in Moscow in support of General Makashov.

POPULAR ANTI-SEMITISM

A recent poll sheds light on the popular Russian reaction towards the trend of political anti-Semitism. An independent poll taken in Moscow in October by the All-Russian Center for the Study of Public Opinion revealed that a majority of Russians agree that anyone insulting the national dignity of the Jews should be prosecuted with all the severity of the law and that it is necessary to guarantee that Jews con-

tinue to enjoy equal rights in access to institutions of higher learning. At the same time, however, the poll demonstrated that of 1,509 respondents, 52% would respond negatively to Jewish social-political organizations and parties operating in Russia, while 34% believe records should be kept of Jews holding leading positions in Russia and that quotas should be kept on such numbers.

Anti-Semitism has always existed in Russia in different forms. A major cause of past excesses endangering the physical well being of the Jewish community resulted in general from government sponsored anti-Semitism. The Communist-dominated parliament's failure to censure General Makashov for his anti-Semitic statements, and Mr. Zyuganov's subsequent letter, are frightful steps backwards to state sponsored anti-Semitism.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The existence of anti-Semitism, and the failure of authorities to speak out, to investigate, to prosecute, is a valid barometer of the ill health of the society. It speaks of the extent of fear, envy and distrust of the population, and measures the potential for political upheaval. It measures the dangers such a society poses to its citizens, its neighbors and its international partners. It is at least as important a measure of democratic viability and reliability as data used to track crime, or missiles, or environmental contamination or trade or other economic and financial indicators.

In the West, Zugarov tries to picture himself as a liberal social democrat, while at home he pursues national socialist policies. The Jewish community of Russia is of the opinion that until Zugarov and his cohorts disassociate themselves from the virulent anti-Semitism in their party voiced during the last few months, the United States of America and any other country should not invite these members of the Duma for inter-parliamentary discussions.

During the latest outburst of anti-Semitism the Russian Jewish Congress mobilized its sister organization in Europe and in the United States, and the government of the State of Israel. The European Jewish Congress approached the European Parliament and the Council of Europe, which in turn have taken a strong stand against Makashov and his supporters. The Council of Europe decided to appoint a special observer for Russia on the issue of anti-Semitism. We intend to testify in front of the European Parliament the 9th of March in Strasbourg. The Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations with the National Conference on Soviet Jewry mobilized members of the House and of the Senate who wrote a strong letter to the Chairman of the Russian Duma, Mr. Gennady Zeleznyov. The World Jewish Congress in turn approached the United Nations Human Rights Commission with this issue.

Inside Russia, after repeated requests from the Russian Jewish Congress, the General Prosecutor's office finally has agreed to open a criminal investigation against Makashov under article 280 (1), which prohibits racial incitement. Although the prosecutor's office might move forward with an indictment, it is not likely that the communist dominated Duma will revoke the immunity of General Makashov. Political pressure from the United States of America might finally convince the Duma to revoke his immunity, and persuade the Prosecutor's office to further pursue all those who broke this law.

Honorable Chairman, Honorable Senators, We would like again stress the importance of the ongoing battle for the voice of democracy and tolerance in Russia. This pressure yields results, even if belatedly. Only last week did Mr. Zyuganov publicly on national TV distance himself from the "Russian National Unity" organization of Barkashov. We are sure that this statement was a result of mounting international pressure on the communist party. We believe also that this pressure should continue. Kondratenko sort of apologized to the local Jewish community in Krasnodar expounding on the distinction between Jews and Zionists. Makashov however, has announced his bid for the governorship of one of Siberia's areas and talk about a presidential bid is circulating in Moscow.

The order of the day is to marginalize anti-Semitic political forces, and forge a large national consensus of Russian political, communal and religious leaders who will stand strong against those political forces, which want to split the country with racism and anti-Semitism. The United States of America and the Democracies of Europe should in their dialogue with the leaders of Russia stress the importance of a strong stand against racism, which is crucial to the wellbeing and internal stability of the Russian Federation.

Notes

¹General Albert Makashov, a Communist Party deputy in the Russian parliament, made a series of statements throughout October 1998 calling for the exter-

mination of all Jews in Russia and blaming them for the country's economic problems.

General Makashov played a major role in the street violence of October 1993. At that time, he urged crowds of his supporters to seek out and beat Jews.

²Victor Ilyukhkin, chairman of the parliament's security and defense committee, accused President Yeltsin and the Jews who he claimed are "exclusively" members of his "inner circle" of committing "genocide" against the Russian people.

³Memorable Quotes:

I will round up all the Jews and send them to the next world!

ALBERT MAKASHOV

Who is to blame? The executive branch, the bankers, and the mass media are to blame. Usury, deceit, corruption, and thievery are flourishing in the country. That is why I call the reformers Yids.

ALBERT MAKASHOV

[Zionism is] more frightening than fascism because it operates from the flanks, clandestinely and secretly.

COMMUNIST MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, GENNADY BENOVA

Hands off Makashov!

To the grave with all Yids.

I will round up all the Jews and send them to the next world.

PRO-COMMUNIST DEMONSTRATORS DURING THE NOVEMBER 7TH
COMMEMORATION OF THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

Quotes from: (Boston Globe, November 8, 1998), (Zavtra, October 20, 1998), (New York Times, November 8, 1998), (Boston Globe, November 8, 1998)

⁴Despite the fact that both President Boris Yeltsin and Mayor of Moscow Yuri Luzhkov condemned his statements, a mildly worded parliamentary motion to censure him was rejected by a vote of 121–107. Eighty-three of the Communist Party's members in the Duma voted against censure, one abstained, and 45, including Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov, did not vote at all. Only one Communist deputy, Duma Speaker Gennady Seleznev, voted for censure. Rather, the parliament adopted a vaguely worded resolution, condemning ethnic hatred, with no reference to Jews, anti-Semitism or General Makashov. The Communist party has also failed to condemn General Makashov or to discipline him. Instead, the General has found a number of vocal supporters within his party and among Russia's many nationalists.

⁵Statement by the Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (December 29, 1998):

Every time when the policy of the ruling regime is a failure it resorts to the old and tested method of escalating anti-Communist hysteria. A distinguishing feature of the present-day campaign of lies and slander, which was launched by electronic mass media, became its defiantly Russo-phobic character. The thesis about "Russian fascism" and a "red-brown" threat, and about "anti-Semitism" as an allegedly official stand taken by the Communist party has been in the picture again.

The aim of this campaign is obvious: to divert the attention of society from the catastrophic situation in which the country is and from those who are truly to blame for it, to provoke anti-Jewish sentiments among the masses and to channel the growing social protest of the working people into a dead-end way—along the line of interethnic conflicts.

I am convinced that these plans are doomed to failure in the end. But eyes should not be closed to the fact that provocateurs succeed now and then in achieving the results they desire. In response to the Russo-phobic hysteria half-baked statements addressed to Jews were voiced by some Communists, statements which run counter to the provisions of the Program of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation and the decisions of the Plenary Session of the Central Committee on the problems related to interethnic relations.

These statements are based on an unjustified and harmful combination of the problem concerning Zionism as a political phenomenon and the Jewish problem. It is, above all, Zionism itself, which declares that it is a "purely national" concept of gathering Jews in the land of their origin, that is interested in such a combination. If the aims of Zionism were really exhausted by this, there would be no additional problems. I want to remind you that it is the Soviet Union, when recognizing the right of the Jewish

people to national and state self-determination, that was active in its efforts in the past to help the establishment of the State of Israel but, certainly, not to the detriment of the vital interests of the Arab people of Palestine.

However, Zionism manifested itself really as a variety of the theory and practice of the most aggressive imperialist circles, which strive for world supremacy. In this respect it is related to fascism. The only difference between them is that Hitlerite Nazism acted under the mask of German nationalism and strove for world supremacy openly, while Zionism, when it appears under the mask of Jewish nationalism, acts in a concealed manner, using, among other things, someone else's hands.

Fascism and Zionism are the most sworn enemies, above all, of those peoples, whose national sentiments and prejudices they exploit. Fascism and Zionism are non-national and profoundly anti-popular in their essence. When World War II was coming to a close, Hitler sought to drag after himself the entire German people into the grave, denying them the right to existence.

The great experience of the struggle of our Motherland against fascism serves us as a lodestar in the struggle against various forms of imperialist aggression. On the part of the peoples of the Soviet Union the struggle against German fascism was the national liberation Patriotic war in the real sense of this term. But it was not in any way the struggle against the German people. Suffice it to recall the words that "Hitlers come and go, whereas the German people remain," which were voiced at the time of a mortal danger for the Soviet people on November 7, 1941, from the main rostrum of the country. It is not out of place to recall the fact that when the war was coming to a close, in the spring of 1945, Ilya Ehrenburg, a member of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, tried to appeal for a national revenge upon Germans, he was rebuffed severely and corrected on the pages of the Pravda newspaper: "Comrade Ehrenburg is getting all mixed up!"

The present-day struggle against Zionism is not and cannot be in principle a struggle against the Jewish people or the State of Israel. We have never identified notions "a Jew" and a "Zionist". When standing for the friendship and fraternity of the peoples of Russia, we believe that all problems, which arise in this sphere, must be settled peacefully during a respectful and constructive dialogue. It is such Russo-Jewish dialogue that we have suggested more than once. Communists are ready to take part in it and on both sides for that matter because our party is internationalist by its composition and ideology.

Any forms in which chauvinism and national intolerance manifest themselves, no matter from whom they might come and what grounds might be used to justify them, are incompatible with communist convictions. These forms include the manifestations of Judeo-phobia, which insult the national dignity not only of Jews but also of all peoples of Russia. Therefore, views and pronouncements, which equate Jews with Zionists, should be condemned as foggy, because they disseminate in great numbers bourgeois and philistine prejudices, mask the class essence of Zionism and thereby make the struggle against it more difficult.

The idea of establishing in a legislative way a "percent norm" of representation of various national and religious communities among governmental authorities should also be recognized as being erroneous. Though this principle was given written expression in the Constitutions of some countries, for example, Lebanon, practice shows that interethnic peace and reconciliation are ensured not in this way. In a democratic country, which we want to see Russia, an equal participation of all communities among the organs of government is a matter related to a free choice of the people, to the government's wisdom and to the tact of the top leaders.

At the same time, the Jewish community should also be more definite on several problems—first and foremost, on the problem concerning its attitude to Zionism. The spread of Zionist ideology among Jews is in any case not the fault but is the misfortune of the Jewish people. The only point is whether Jews intend to continue to be reconciled to such a situation when their national sentiments serve now and then as a screen for Zionist ideology.

We believe that Jews, like the representatives of any Diaspora, have an inalienable right:

- to leave Russia for Israel, their historical Motherland, or for any other country;

- to recognize Russia as their only Motherland, to live and work for its benefit within the composition of the Jewish community as an equal member of the multinational people of Russia;
- to assimilate in regard to nationality, culture and language into the Russian people or any other people of Russia.

No one has only the right, being a citizen of Russia, to regard it as an alien "country of residence" and to be in it an "internal emigre", acting to the detriment of its interests and in favour of another country or an international corporation. There is no right either to be an instrument in the hands of Zionism. Not a single country in the world can reconcile itself to such doings and is obliged to put an end to them by all lawful means.

Communists did not invent this problem, which really exists. *Our people are not blind. They cannot but see that the Zionization of the governmental authorities of Russia was one of the causes of the present-day catastrophic situation in which the country is, of the mass impoverishment and extinction of its population. They cannot close their eyes to the aggressive and destructive role of Zionist capital in the disruption of the economy of Russia and in the misappropriation of its national property.* They are right when they ask the question as to how it could happen that the key positions in several branches of economy were seized during privatization mainly by the representatives of one nationality. They see that control over most of the electronic mass media, which wage a destructive struggle against our Fatherland, morality, language, culture and beliefs, is concentrated in the hands of the same persons.

I am convinced that the citizens of all nationalities living in Russia will be wise enough to examine these problems in a quiet and balanced way without yielding to provocations and without letting themselves be carried away by nationalistic intoxication. Among the people there is a growing awareness that the criminal course pursued by the anti-popular and non-national oligarchy, which seized power, underlies all their present-day misfortunes. It is only the restoration of the sovereignty of the people and a resolute change in the social and economic course that will ensure the revival and prosperity of Russia and all its multinational people.

ZYUGANOV,
December 23, 1998.

⁶Mr. Zyuganov, while reprimanding Mr. Makashov for his "intemperance," stated in a press conference that there were not enough ethnic Russians on television, a thinly veiled allegation that there are too many Jews in prominent positions. He also stated that if Jews feel insulted by Mr. Makashov's statements, they can participate in a "public dialogue" between Jews and Communists that would include a discussion of incidences in which the Russian people have also been insulted and humiliated.

⁷For the past two years, residents of Krasnodar have been bombarded with his anti-Semitic rhetoric on television, at youth forums, and at mass rallies where he regularly charges Zionists with brutal oppression of ethnic Russians, and blames Jews for the political and economic problems plaguing Russia. "Today we warn that dirty cosmopolitan brotherhood: You belong in Israel or America," Kondratenko said at a Russian Victory Day rally in March 1997.

More recently, in March 1998 at a youth congress in Krasnodar he addressed his audience with a two hour speech dedicated to the "Jewish Question." Elected on a platform of Russian patriotism, since becoming Governor, Kondratenko has transformed this position into one of ultra-nationalism, declaring that ethnic Russians are the only ethnic group which belongs in the region. Kondratenko recently won re-election in Krasnedar which will keep him in power until the year 2000.

⁸In December 1998, residents of a number of apartment buildings in the Kuban region of Krasnodar found leaflets circulated by a local fascist group in their mailboxes with the message, "Help save your dear, flourishing Kuban from the damned Jews-Yids! Smash their apartments, set their homes on fire! They have no place on Kuban territory ... Anyone hiding the damned Yids will be marked for destruction the same way. The Yids will be destroyed. Victory will be ours!" The leaflets also called on voters to support Governor Kondratenko, known for his anti-Semitism, for president. However, citizens reacted by immediately reporting the leaflets to local authorities as an incident of anti-Semitism.

⁹A leader of Russian National Unity, Igor Semyonov, was sentenced in 1998 to two years in prison for inciting hatred toward Jews and people from the Caucasus Mountains. At the trial, a local Communist leader denied the massacre of over

33,000 Jews at Babi Yar in 1941 and a Russian Orthodox Priest testified that according to the Talmud, Jews “kill children, gather blood” and use it to make matzah. Although the judge sentenced Semyonov, no objection was made to the anti-Semitic testimonies used at the trial.

¹⁰ Estimates of Barkashov’s numbers range to upwards of 100,000—possibly a high number—but, as Yevgeny Proshechkin, head of the Moscow Anti-Fascist Center notes, “it’s not the numbers that are so dangerous; it’s the ideology.” Noting the comparison to the Weimar Republic, he claims, “a few thousand armed and ideologically prepared people always manage to beat a multimillion-people majority.”

¹¹ *In Kstovo (Nizhny Oblast) on November 22*, the local official TV station, which reports to the mayor, favorably described the ties between local law enforcement agencies and the RNE (Russian National Unity), which they characterized as a “normal public organization” that will form a brigade to help police enforce law and order in the streets. The local FSB head described these fascists as “normal young men who want to see more public order in the city.”

In October in the northwestern Russian town of Borovichy, the town was plastered with stickers proclaiming that “Jews are rubbish” and depicting a hand dropping a Star of David into a trash can.

For many months, Barkashovites from Moscow have been organizing teenagers there, engaging in a campaign of death threats aimed at Jews. A recent TV program showed RNE leaders meeting with military recruiters, planning collaboration.

¹² THE GOVERNMENT OF MOSCOW DECREE

December 15, 1998 #951

Appeals have been sent to the government of Moscow by the Council of Public Organizations of Veterans of War, Labor, and Military Service of the Central Administrative District, the Moscow Anti-Fascist Center, the Moscow Helsinki Group, the public fund “Glasnost”, the All-Russian Public Movement “For Human Rights”, and a series of other public organizations and movements which have protested the planned convocation of a “Russian National Unity” congress in Moscow on December 19, 1998. The protests were motivated by the fact that the RNE is a pro-fascist organization that propagates ideas of ethnic superiority, that its activities are offensive to the memory of those who died in World War Two, and that the above-mentioned congress threatens the rebirth of fascism.

Having examined these appeals, as well as numerous media publications dealing with the activities of the RNE, in accordance with Point 3, Article 17 and Point 2, Article 29 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation and Point 3 of Presidential Decree Number 310, dated March 23, 1995, “On the Means of Coordinating the Activities of Government Agencies in the Fight against Manifestations of Fascism and Other Forms of Political Extremism in the Russian Federation,” the government of Moscow decrees:

1. A ban on the public-political organization “Russian National Unity” holding a congress or any other form of public meeting in the city of Moscow.
2. The Governmental Department of Internal Affairs (GUVD) of the city of Moscow, along with prefects of the administrative districts, will guarantee the implementation of Point 1 of this decree.
3. The Premier of the Government of Moscow takes upon himself the implementation of this decree.

YURI. M. LUZHKOVA,
PREMIER OF THE GOVERNMENT OF MOSCOW,
Moscow.

¹³ Alexander Barkashov, leader of Russian National Unity (RNE), spoke threateningly against Luzhkov and city authorities on December 16, after the Moscow government on December 15 banned an RNE congress in town.

¹⁴ *Feb. 04, 1999—(Reuters)* Moscow’s police chief fired two senior officers on Wednesday for their failure to stop a weekend march by ultra-nationalists wearing Nazi-style armbands.

“From now on tough measures will be applied to those who breach Moscow city’s laws on public gatherings and marches,” police chief Nikolai Kulikov told a news conference.

He said the head of one of Moscow’s 10 territorial police divisions and the head of the unit that was monitoring the march had been fired and a number of others had been reprimanded.

He did not clarify in what way the several dozen supporters of ultra-nationalist Aleksander Barkashov's Russian National Unity (RNE) had broken the law on Sunday.

Police, facing criticism from the mayor for failing to stop them, had previously said they had had no legal grounds for doing so. Russian television showed a policeman apologizing to some RNE members on Sunday for having briefly detained them.

The sackings came a day after top Russian security officials, including the justice and the interior ministers, pledged a crackdown on political extremism.

The RNE is a semi-military organization which calls for a dictatorship based on the dominance of ethnic Russians. Its members sport distinctive black uniforms, wear a symbol strongly reminiscent of the swastika and make Nazi-style salutes.

¹⁵ "If any of Interior Ministry department chiefs does not adequately react with extremist actions, I will not have them work (in the police)," Stepashin said at a session of the presidential commission for the struggle against political extremism on Tuesday.

¹⁶ Whatever these troubled economic and political times suggest for Russia's future, during the past year the Yeltsin administration has made various efforts to work against the nationalist and extremist forces in their nation. In an historic address to the nation on the occasion of the 57th anniversary of Nazi Germany's invasion of Russia in June 1998, President Yeltsin warned for the first time of an increasing threat to Russia by the active neo-Nazi movement. In addition, throughout the year he and other senior members of his government have condemned a number of manifestations of anti-Semitism in Russia.

In July 1998 the President again spoke out against neo-Nazism by criticizing his Justice Minister for allowing extremist and ultra-nationalist groups to receive official certification in Russia. He said that the Russian Constitution prohibits registration of such groups. In September he attended an historic ceremony for the opening of the Holocaust Memorial and Synagogue in Moscow and called for a moment of silence for those who perished in the Holocaust, while Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov presented an 18th century Torah scroll to the synagogue.

In November 1998, following the Duma debate on General Makashov's anti-Semitic remarks which ended in a failure to condemn the General, President Yeltsin issued a public statement against extremism and ethnic hatred. His top security and defense officials also met at that time with the President's Chief of Staff to discuss the growing threat of anti-Semitism and extremism in Russia.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DAVID A. HARRIS

Mr. Chairman, I wish to express my deepest appreciation to you and your distinguished colleagues for the opportunity to appear here today on the pressing topic of the state of anti-Semitism in Russia.

I have the privilege of representing the American Jewish Committee, with which I have been associated since 1979. Much of that time, given my own background in Soviet affairs and knowledge of the Russian language, has been devoted to matters affecting the USSR and the post-Soviet successor states.

The American Jewish Committee, our nation's oldest human relations agency, was founded in 1906, and today comprises more than 75,000 members and supporters across the United States. We have thirty-one offices in major American cities and eight overseas posts.

We are in close contact with Jews throughout the Former Soviet Union, travel regularly to Russia, commission research and polling on conditions affecting Russian Jews, and meet frequently with high-level Russian officials to discuss issues of concern to the Russian Jewish community, as well as Russia's relations with the U.S. and the countries of the Middle East.

Indeed, our organization was founded in response to the pogroms of Jews in Czarist Russia at the beginning of this century. On January 8, 1906, five leading American Jews sent out a letter to fifty-seven of their colleagues inviting them to a meeting in New York. The letter read in part:

"The horrors attending the recent Russian massacres and the necessity of extending to our brethren a helping hand in a manner most conducive to the accomplishment of a permanent improvement of their unfortunate condition, have, with remarkable spontaneity, induced thoughtful Jews in all parts of the United States, to suggest the advisability of the formation of a General Committee, to deal with the acute problems thus presented, which are likely to recur, even in their acute phases,

so long as the objects of our solicitude are subjected to disabilities and persecution owing to their religious belief.”

Later that year, the American Jewish Committee was founded. Its mission statement read: “The purpose of this Committee is to prevent infringement of the civil and religious rights of Jews, and to alleviate the consequences of persecution.”

Two months later, in establishing a Press Bureau, the AJC leaders declared with prescience: “For the prevention of massacres of Jews in Russia, no means can be considered so effective as the enlightenment of the people of the Western world concerning real conditions in Russia . . .”

These AJC leaders were right on target at the time; their approach is equally valid today. Human rights danger zones require outside monitoring and exposure, lest potential perpetrators believe they can act with impunity and benefit from the world’s indifference.

Senators, I wish to commend you. You are carrying on a remarkable Congressional tradition, dating back to the last century, of examining Russian attitudes toward, and treatment of, Jews.

In the earliest known case, on June 11, 1879, Congress passed a joint resolution that cited, laws of the Russian Government that “no Hebrew can hold real estate” and condemned Russia because a naturalized American Jewish citizen was prohibited from gaining title to land in Russia he had purchased and paid for.

As another illustration, in 1890 the House of Representatives passed a resolution requesting President Benjamin Harrison “To communicate to the House of Representatives . . . any information in his possession concerning the enforcement of prescriptive edicts against the Jews in Russia, recently ordered, as reported in the press . . .”

And on December 13, 1911, the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations held a hearing on S.J. Res. 60, “a joint resolution providing for the termination of the treaty of commerce and navigation between the United States of America and Russia concluded at St. Petersburg December 18, 1832.”

I mention this particular 1911 Senate hearing for three reasons.

First, it illustrates the direct and long-standing involvement of this Committee on Foreign Relations in matters affecting the treatment of Jews in Russia.

Second, the outcome of the hearing was that the Foreign Relations Committee voted unanimously to adopt the resolution because of the Russian government’s refusal to issue entry visas to American citizens of the Jewish faith, in contravention of the 1832 bilateral commercial treaty. Within days, the measure had been approved overwhelmingly by both Houses of Congress and, on President Taft’s instructions, the U.S. ambassador to Moscow, Curtis Gould, Jr., was instructed to advise Russia of the termination of the 1832 treaty.

This marked the first—though not the last—time Congress would establish a direct linkage between Russia’s human rights record and America’s economic policy toward that country. The landmark Jackson-Vanik Amendment, passed over sixty years later by Congress, linked the extension of American most-favored-nation (MFN) trade status with the emigration policy of Communist countries.

And third, that 1911 hearing was addressed principally by the leadership of the American Jewish Committee, including Judge Mayer Sulzberger, president of AJC at the time, and Louis Marshall, Esq., one of the nation’s most eminent jurists. While honored to follow in their footsteps, I am dismayed that the issues that preoccupied them in the early years of this century remain with us, in one form or another, as the century closes.

One hundred and twenty years after Congress first acted regarding Russia’s mistreatment of Jews—and eighty-eight years after the American Jewish Committee first appeared before this very Committee on the same subject—we gather here once again to examine the condition of hundreds of thousands of Jews residing in Russia who are living in an uncertain environment.

In the brief time allotted to me, let me emphasize just a few central points, some of them implicit in my introductory comments.

To begin with, anti-Semitism in Russia has a tragically long history. Mistreatment of Jews in Russia can be documented for hundreds of years.

There was the intolerance and hostility of the Russian Orthodox Church toward Jews and Judaism over the centuries, as well as the government decree in 1727 that “all Jews found to be residing in the Ukraine and in other Russian towns shall be forthwith expelled beyond the frontier and not permitted under any circumstance to re-enter Russia.”

There was the restricted residency of Jews in the so-called “Pale of Settlement” beginning in the late eighteenth century, as well as the wave of pogroms spurred by the accession to the throne in 1881 of the anti-reformist, militantly nationalistic Czar Alexander III, after the assassination of his father, Alexander II. This situa-

tion continued for twenty-five years through the reign of the equally reactionary Nicholas II.

There were the anti-Semitic attacks by both Communist and anti-Communist forces during the post-1917 Soviet civil war, Stalin's ruthless purges, and the determined Communist campaign to extinguish all vestiges of Judaism as a religion while restricting the vertical mobility of Soviet Jews.

For hundreds of years, then, waves of violence, blood libels, restrictive or punitive decrees involving education, employment, residency, and military service, and other forms of repression have been all-too-familiar features of the Russian landscape. As a result, countless Jews were killed and millions emigrated, especially to the United States.

Still, many remained. Russia was, after all, their place of birth, their home, and all that was familiar to them.

Precisely because of the centuries-old pattern of persecution punctuated, it must be noted, by occasional periods of hope and relative calm, depending largely, if not entirely, on the ruler of the day—there is a need to take very seriously manifestations of anti-Semitism in Russia at any time, not least today. Put most starkly, we ignore the lessons of history at our peril.

The situation today for Jews in the Russian Federation is extraordinarily complex.

On the one hand, Jewish life in the post-Communist era is miraculously re-emerging, notwithstanding the relentless, 70-year-long effort of the Communist apparatus to uproot and destroy it. Synagogues, schools, community centers, and a myriad of other Jewish institutions are developing, and contacts between Russian Jews and Jews beyond Russia's borders are frequent and unrestricted. The presence here on our panel of Rabbi Goldschmidt of Moscow is but one testament to this remarkable development.

Yet, at the very same time, the intractability of the country's economic and political travails should be a cautionary note for us, as should its fragile democratic system.

Given the widespread impoverishment and the glaring income gap between the wealthy few and the rest of the population, persistent unemployment and underemployment, widespread pessimism about the future, endemic corruption, and mounting criminal violence, Russia's democratic experiment is not assured of permanence—especially against the backdrop of Russian history, which lacks any sustained encounter with democracy, the rule of law, and civil society.

Instead, the fear persists that this embryonic democratic effort could yield—perhaps even in the upcoming elections—to a more nationalistic, authoritarian, or Communist regime, whose rallying cry might well include the alleged responsibility of the Jews or, in only slightly more veiled terms, the “non-Russians,” for Russia's economic stagnation, loss of empire, or domestic turmoil. In a word, scapegoating.

It has worked before in Russian history; it could well occur again.

The recent disturbing anti-Semitic incidents, whether by spokesmen of the extreme right or by the left in the Communist-dominated Duma (Parliament) or, for that matter, outside Moscow—most notably in provinces like Krasnodar, whose governor, Nikolai Kondratenko, elected in 1996, is an unabashed anti-Semite—should give us serious pause. The National Conference on Soviet Jewry, represented here today by its executive director, Mark Levin, and of which the American Jewish Committee is a founding member, has closely monitored these and other incidents.

Again, history has shown the enduring appeal of anti-Semitism as a political weapon in this part of the world, especially during periods of transition, when a country like Russia is convulsed by dramatic and unsettling change.

This is one such period. Should political, economic, and social conditions in Russia improve, Jewish vulnerability could ebb. If, however, conditions either continue to stagnate or decline, the Jews might well be blamed, as they have in the past, for Russia's daunting difficulties—accused of profiting at Russia's expense or attacked as outsiders disloyal to “Mother Russia.”

Second, the best antidote to anti-Semitism in such situations would be clear, consistent, and unambiguous statements from Russia's leading political figures and by spokesmen for the country's key institutions, coupled with appropriate action to relegate anti-Semitism to society's margins.

Anti-Semitism may not be entirely extinguishable, but the aim must be to deny it acceptability in mainstream society. In other words, there can be no compromise with anti-Semitism or anti-Semites in the legitimate political discourse and debate of the country. Anything less, history again has taught us, sends the dangerous message that anti-Semitism is in fact a negotiable political issue.

Come elections, will there be Russian politicians with the courage to denounce unequivocally those who openly or in coded language “play the anti-Semitic card” as

part of their campaign platform, and instead appeal to the higher instincts of the Russian people? One can only hope so.

Will there be a critical mass of the Russian people prepared to reject any such crude charges against the Jews? Again, one can only hope so.

But we are entering an election period when there will be a temptation to sound the nationalist theme, that is, to pander to a disaffected electorate looking for simplistic explanations for the country's deeply rooted difficulties, or to conjure up "enemies"—internal or external—who allegedly undermine the country's well-being. This may prove dangerous.

Some key Russian institutions, especially the Russian Orthodox Church, could, if they choose, play a constructive role in this regard. Until now, the church's role has been at best equivocal. The Russian Orthodox Church, which occupies a privileged place in the religious life of Russia, has never undergone the kind of soul searching and moral and historical reckoning regarding its relations with the Jews that the Catholic Church and many Protestant churches, to their credit, have initiated in the second half of this century. Such an undertaking is overdue.

The Russian educational system surely could do much more to promote concepts of tolerance and understanding among the country's many and diverse nationalities and religious groups, including the Jews.

During the Communist era, when I had an opportunity to spend several months in the USSR teaching in elementary and secondary schools in Moscow and Leningrad, an essential element of the prevailing ideology, however factually untrue, was the so-called "brotherhood of Soviet nationalities." Since it was a given, there was no need to teach it, or so the conventional Communist wisdom went.

Russia today desperately needs to teach its young people the importance, especially for a democratic society, of the genuine equality of all its citizens, be they of Jewish, Chechen, Gypsy, Armenian, or other origin, and of the consequent need to appreciate and respect the culture and contribution of each group.

The American Jewish Committee has launched a curriculum review project to examine what is taught about Jews, Judaism, and the Holocaust in post-Communist societies. The studies on Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia have already been issued. A study on the Russian educational system is currently under way (as are studies in Ukraine and Lithuania). I would be pleased to submit the Russian study to this Subcommittee when it is completed.

Are new laws needed in Russia to deal with anti-Semitism and other forms of hate? It is a difficult question to answer, in part because our American Bill of Rights enshrines freedom of speech, however repugnant it may sometimes be, as an essential tenet of democracy. At the same time, there are already several laws on the Russian books respecting incitement and empowering the government to prosecute publishers of extremist publications, including those deemed to be anti-Semitic. To date, however, even these laws have seldom been invoked, which may be interpreted benignly as just another manifestation of the country's current inefficiency, or more darkly as a calculated unwillingness to confront the country's hatemongers.

Mr. Chairman, I conclude as I began. In 1907, the American Jewish Committee understood that "For the prevention of massacres against Jews in Russia, no means can be considered so effective as the enlightenment of the people of the Western world concerning real conditions in Russia. . . ."

I would add that today, unlike 1907, we in fact have the possibility of pursuing two parallel strategies to insure the well-being of Jews in Russia.

The first is the recognition that democracy and democratic institutions are the best assurance that Jews—indeed all who live in Russia—will be governed by the rule of law, not the rule of whim. We have an extraordinary opportunity, previously unimagined or unimaginable, to help transform Russia into a full-fledged member of the family of democratic nations. Needless to say, we cannot as a nation do it alone, nor, as our experience since 1991 has demonstrated, are we yet assured of success. But to shrink from the challenge at this stage would be historically irresponsible.

And second, we as a nation must continue to make clear to Russia and its leaders that, as they look to Washington for assistance, support, and recognition of their international standing, unstinting respect for democracy, human rights and the rule of law is central to our bilateral agenda with Moscow, never a footnote or an afterthought. And history has in fact taught us that the political and social condition of Jews in a country such as Russia is just about the most accurate barometric reading of the overall state of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

As the leaders of the Moscow Anti-Fascist Centre wrote in an open letter in 1996: "We are deeply convinced that anti-Semitism in Russia threatens not only Jews. . . . The growth of anti-Semitism threatens the foundations of Russian democracy,

the rights and freedom of the Russian people itself and other peoples of Russia.” In other words, for Russia to make the full transition to genuine democracy, as we pray it will, means, among other things, exorcising the demon of anti-Semitism from its midst.

In this regard, the Congress and this Subcommittee in particular have a vitally important role to play in addressing the condition of Jews in Russia. Judging from the impressive historical record stretching back 120 years, and exemplified by hearings such as this one today, I am confident that the Congress will do so with characteristic distinction, unswerving principle, and relentless commitment.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MARK B. LEVIN

Mr. Chairman, it is an honor to appear before your subcommittee, on behalf of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry (NCSJ), and I want to begin by recognizing your commitment and that of many of your colleagues to the issue of anti-Semitism in Russia and elsewhere in the former Soviet Union. That commitment is evident not only in the timely scheduling of this hearing, but in the ongoing efforts of so many on Capitol Hill. These efforts have had and will continue to have a definite impact on the prospects for pluralism and democratization in Russia.

My testimony today will focus on the recent anti-Semitic statements espoused by Communist Party officials in Russia. This sustained rhetoric has created a tense atmosphere and growing fear of anti-Semitism in an already precarious environment. The situation requires a sustained response: a strong voice in support of democracy and civil freedoms, and staunch opposition to those opposed to minority rights and freedoms. This is a large task that requires the collective efforts of the U.S. government and human rights organizations.

The NCSJ and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) recently co-authored a White Paper, “The Reemergence of Political Anti-Semitism in Russia: A Call to Action,” which we presented to Secretary of State Madeleine Albright before her trip to Moscow last month. The ADL, a member agency of NCSJ, has asked to be associated with my testimony today, and I offer a copy of that document of this hearing to include in the record of this hearing. I would also ask that the full list of our national member agencies be inserted into the record.

The NCSJ has served as the voice of the organized American Jewish community on issues of Soviet Jewry for the past 27 years. Comprising nearly 50 national organizations and over 300 local federations, community councils and committees nationwide, the NCSJ mobilizes the resources and energies of millions of U.S. citizens on behalf of the Jews of the former Soviet Union. It is my privilege to appear today on the same panel with two of our close partners in this work, Chief Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt of Moscow and Executive Director David Harris of the American Jewish Committee.

The NCSJ works actively with the National Security Council, Department of State, the Helsinki Commission and Members of Congress in fulfilling its mandate to secure the rights of Jews living in the former Soviet Union. We continue to support U.S. efforts to aid this region and believe that an active foreign policy is one of the best antidotes to anti-Semitic rhetoric. The NCSJ supports Administration and Congressional actions of the last few months in condemning the Communist Party’s attempt to rekindle anti-Semitism. In particular, NCSJ is grateful for the strong message sent by Vice President Al Gore and Secretary of State Albright in their recent meetings with Prime Minister Primakov and Foreign Minister Ivanov. It is imperative that U.S. policy continues its engagement in working with and supporting pro-democracy forces in Russia and elsewhere, and to counter negative messages of ethnic hatred, such as those adopted by the Communist Party of Russia. The NCSJ also looks forward to working with the Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom Abroad, recently created under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998.

Anti-Semitism has a deep-seated history in Russia. In Tsarist times, a “Pale of Settlement” created a boundary, restricting where Jews could live, while pogroms—mass riots that killed thousands of Jews—prevailed throughout the Russian empire. In the Soviet era, anti-Semitism was state policy, and its firmly-planted roots have allowed post-Soviet anti-Semitism to reappear, as the restraints on the Communist system were lifted. Incidents have occurred in the last few years, from synagogue bombings and cemetery desecration to threats and attacks on individuals. And it is commonly known that in times of economic and political turmoil in Russia, Jews have traditionally become scapegoats.

In recent months, anti-Semitism has become a political tool for numerous members of the Communist leadership. Essentially, the legislative branch of the Russian government has become a vehicle to espouse anti-Semitism. Should the tensions their rhetoric is creating erupt into mass outright violence, Jews might be the first victims, but they would not be the last. We must defend the rights of all minorities in Russia, and make these views clearly known during this time of economic chaos and political uncertainty.

While it is true that anti-Semitic and nationalist rhetoric largely emanates from extremist circles, such extremists can no longer be considered fringe groups. The Communist Party and other powerful factions in the Duma regularly tolerate the use of ethnic and anti-Semitic slurs and proposals. The Duma has yet to pass legislation proposed by President Boris Yeltsin last spring, banning the use of swastikas. Russian National Unity, a violent and anti-Semitic nationalist organization, now has chapters in over a dozen cities across Russia, and anti-Semitic editorials in Russian newspapers such as *Slavyanskaya Gazeta*. Parliamentary elections set for later this year, and the presidential vote to follow, can only increase the incentive for certain candidates to promote or tolerate inflammatory appeals to popular dissatisfaction, unless such behavior is commonly understood to be unacceptable.

An independent poll taken last October in Moscow by the All-Russian Center for the Study of Public Opinion revealed that many Russians continue to stereotype Jews. Of 1,509 respondents, 52% responded negatively to Jewish social-political organizations and parties operating in Russia, and 64% responded negatively to a Jew becoming president of Russia. Asked whether a record should be kept of Jews holding leading positions in Russia and whether there should be a quota, 34% responded yes to both. When asked whether many Jews hold posts in the leadership's and government's inner circles, 41% agreed, 23% of whom were not pleased about it. And, 29% of respondents did not believe General Albert Makashov should be indicted for his "remarks about Jews." In addition, when asked whether nationality (i.e., ethnic origin) should be a factor when appointing someone to a key government post, 53% responded yes. The results of this survey indicate that during troubled economic and political times Russians return to negative stereotypes about Jews and power. It also sends a signal that public messages of anti-Semitism—such as those espoused by elected officials—have the potential to penetrate deeply into the psyche of the Russian population.

BACKGROUND

Political anti-Semitism is a growing problem in the former Soviet Union, particularly in Russia. Today, in Russia, neo-Nazis, skinheads and fascist ideologues are increasingly committing violence against Jews and other ethnic minorities, while spreading anti-Semitic propaganda. In 1998, anti-Semitic incidents included the beating of two rabbis, the bombing of Moscow's Marina Roscha Synagogue for the second time in two years, neo-Nazi marches in central Moscow and in front of the Choral Synagogue, and the desecration of two Jewish cemeteries.

Duma Member General Albert Makashov has become infamous in recent months for his anti-Semitic outbursts. Makashov publicly blames Jews for the country's economic problems, and advocates a reinstatement of the Pale of Settlement. The newspaper *Zavtra*, printed an editorial by Makashov in which he said that a "Yid" is "a bloodsucker feeding on the misfortunes of other people. They drink the blood of the indigenous peoples of the state; they are destroying industry and agriculture." He recently led a chant at a mass rally, "Death to the Yids!" as demonstrators cheered. At another rally and repeatedly shown on Russian television, Makashov angrily shouted "I will round up all the Yids and send them to the next world!" On Monday of this week, February 22, Makashov continued his message of hate and violence in an address to a Cossack conference in Novochoerkassk in the Rostov region, proclaiming, "We will be anti-Semites and must be victorious!" But Communists in the Duma refuse to officially censure him or isolate him from the Party, and Makashov has found supporters among Russia's nationalists.

Another Communist Duma Member using anti-Semitism as a political strategy is the head of the Duma's security committee, Victor Ilyukhin. He asserted at a parliamentary session in December that Jews were committing genocide against the Russian people. Ilyukhin complained that there are too many Jews in President Yeltsin's inner circle and called for ethnic quotas in government posts.

The recent political assassination of Duma member Galina Staravoirova, an ardent advocate of human rights, underscores the political chaos and rampant, unchecked corruption raging through Russia today. In November 1998, the Duma voted down a censure vote on Albert Makashov, demonstrating its failure to prosecute officials who incite ethnic hatred. Shortly before her death, Staravoirova had

spoken out against Makashov and his anti-Semitic rhetoric. During Staravoitova's funeral in St. Petersburg, the nationalist, anti-Semitic group The Black Hundreds, marched in front of the Parliament in Moscow in support of Makashov.

In December 1998, President Yeltsin requested a statement from Communist Party Leader Gennady Zyuganov regarding his party's position on anti-Semitism. Zyuganov subsequently sent a letter to the Justice Ministry and the national security chief, containing harsh anti-Semitic references reminiscent of anti-Semitic views in the Soviet era. In fact, his statement in the letter that Jews should either emigrate, assimilate or live as Jews pledging sole allegiance to Russia echoes a statement made by Tsar Nicholas II 100 years ago that one-third of Jews should be killed, one-third should emigrate, and the last third convert to Orthodoxy. The letter also states, "Zionism has actually shown itself to be one of the strains of theory and practice of the most aggressive imperialist circles striving for world domination. In this respect it is related to fascism." Not only has Zyuganov failed to condemn the anti-Semitic rhetoric of his colleagues in the Duma, but also he has made his own hateful views clear, speaking on behalf of the entire Communist Party.

Before her visit last month to Moscow, Secretary Albright met at length with the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, the Anti-Defamation League, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, the American Jewish Committee, and B'nai B'rith International. The Secretary shared our concerns over anti-Semitic trends and, in her meetings with the Russian leadership, repeatedly raised this issue and urged Prime Minister Yevgeni Primakov to publicly express his opposition to anti-Semitic political rhetoric, as President Yeltsin and others have done on several occasions. While arranging meetings with several of Russia's presidential hopefuls, Secretary Albright conspicuously avoided any contact with Mr. Zyuganov.

In the southern city of Krasnodar, the anti-Semitic rhetoric of Governor Nikolai Kondratenko has reverberated for years. On television, at youth forums, and at mass rallies, Kondratenko charges that Zionists brutally oppress ethnic Russians, and blames Jews for the political and economic problems that plague Russia. "Today we warn that dirty cosmopolitan brotherhood: You belong in Israel or America," Kondratenko said at a rally. He has turned the patriotism on which he campaigned into ultra-nationalism, declaring that ethnic Russians are the only group that belongs in the region. Kondratenko has just won re-election, and the anti-Semitic rhetoric has reached a new level. In December 1998, residents of the Kuban region of Krasnodar found leaflets in their mailboxes with the message, "Help save your dear, flourishing Kuban from the damned Jews-Yids! Smash their apartments, set their homes on fire! They have no place on Kuban territory . . . Anyone hiding the damned Yids will be marked for destruction the same way. The Yids will be destroyed. Victory will be ours!" According to recent press reports, Kondratenko—though remaining anti-Zionist—has expressed regret for some of his own anti-Semitic statements, but the tone he has already set for the statements and actions of others is itself regrettable.

Economic conditions in Russia have deteriorated drastically in the past year. A fluctuating ruble, inflated consumer prices, and rampant unpaid wages and pensions plague Russian citizens. The chaotic economic conditions, coupled with an unstable political situation, make the future vastly uncertain and have prompted Russians to look for someone to blame; a traditional choice in Russia has been the Jews.

In this context, I also wish to quote from suggestions adopted last week by the Commission on International Affairs of the American Jewish Congress, a member agency of NCSJ:

The readiness of Russian society to reject and repudiate anti-Semitism is a measure of the readiness of that society to adopt substantial change. Firm action against anti-Semitism is a necessary and credible indication that Russia is willing to face up to and take on the whole host of other problems it confronts in its national life.

This readiness can best be demonstrated by explicit repudiation of all forms of anti-Semitism and anti-Semitic statements or policies that emanate from or are endorsed by government leaders, including action by the Duma disavowing and reversing its failure to censure General Albert Makashov.

This new resolve could be demonstrated in part, by the adoption of clear and transparent means of ensuring strict enforcement of those laws that already make it a crime to foment anti-Semitic and other ethnic hatred.

CONCLUSION

Anti-Semitism remains a serious threat in Russia today. Totalitarian philosophies, such as those cited above, are not concerned with human rights, and have negative views toward minority groups. Meanwhile, weak democratic structures

exist in the former Soviet Union, allowing the unchecked freedom to propagate ethnic hatred and violence. The Soviet Jewry movement has made great achievements over the past three decades. Now is not the time to let a reactionary voice override these accomplishments. Now is the time for Russia's leadership to exhibit a greater resolve in addressing this issue.

It is critical that the Russian government understand the importance of its commitment to human rights and the rule of law, and that it adhere to that commitment. It is critical that Russia develop the necessary infrastructure to support economic development, and guarantees law enforcement and the protection of civil rights for all its citizens. It is critical to advocate the prosecution of anyone, from common citizen to government official, who propagates ethnic hatred. This is the time to send a strong message to Russia, denouncing the growing anti-Semitism and urging these officials to take concrete action to eradicate and repudiate anti-Semitism.

The situation also requires continued U.S. government leadership. U.S. leaders, including Members of Congress, must continue to emphasize to Russia's leadership the ongoing transition toward a democratic and pluralistic society in Russia and the development of an appropriate infrastructure to support economic development, law enforcement and minority rights. Crucial to protecting the development toward democracy is a strong effort to address the economic difficulties in Russia and remain actively engaged in foreign policy efforts so that democracy and a market-oriented economy can flourish. The U.S. must signal to Russia that we stand by a strong commitment to human rights and we are ready to assist them in every way possible in building the foundations of democracy.

It is also imperative that human rights organizations develop educational initiatives that foster pluralism and tolerance and support for human rights and democracy. Some Western models for combating racism and ethnic hatred—such as the innovative programs of the Anti-Defamation League and the American Jewish Committee, both member agencies of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry—may be adapted to Russian communities as well. Such programs can encourage multi-cultural understanding and comprise a long-range strategy toward the eradication of anti-Semitism and ethnic hatred in Russia. The NCSJ is prepared to work with other human rights groups to develop appropriate educational programs.

The NCSJ supports and encourages government-to-government contacts and the raising of specific concerns at every possible opportunity. This includes correspondence as well as meetings in the United States or in the former Soviet Union. As it has been through 30 years of Soviet and post-Soviet history, Russian officials must know that anti-Semitism and appeals to ethnic hatred are unacceptable in American eyes and counter-productive to realizing the fullest potential of the Russian people.

Earlier this week, the Jewish Council for Public Affairs—a national community-relations umbrella body and a member organization of NCSJ—passed its community-relations agenda for 1999–2000 focusing on both the challenges and opportunities facing Russia and its Jewish community of over one million. The NCSJ agrees with the American Jewish Congress, whose Commission on International Affairs states: "We choose to believe that anti-Semitism is not indelibly and immutably rooted in the Russian character." Such hopes notwithstanding, real progress can only be judged by real statements, actions, and results.

The NCSJ has worked closely with the U.S. government in this endeavor, and we will continue to do so. We urge the U.S. government to continue its efforts and work with other governments and international organizations to promote the development of democratic and pluralistic institutions and traditions. The protection of minority rights—within the overarching goal of promoting human rights—is at the heart of this effort. Russia's successful development toward democracy depends on it.

THE REEMERGENCE OF POLITICAL ANTI-SEMITISM IN RUSSIA

I. INTRODUCTION

Political anti-Semitism appears to be on the rise in Russia, where an unstable political situation and chaotic economic conditions have led some to blame Jews for society's ills. While the anti-Semitism that existed as official state policy during the Soviet era has not resurfaced, some prominent political figures, particularly those associated with the Communist party, have employed anti-Semitism to further their own political ambitions. Such anti-Semitism, espoused by government leaders in parliamentary hearings, on television, in newspapers and at mass rallies, threatens to create a hostile environment for the Russian Jewish community. Furthermore, as

this practice of scapegoating Jews as the source of Russia's economic and social problems has become increasingly common on both the national and local levels, some analysts suggest that these lawmakers are trying to garner support from nationalist voters ahead of the late 1999 general elections and 2000 Presidential elections. Alarming, these politicians have made their anti-Semitic statements without penalty by their colleagues or the state.

II. BACKGROUND CONDITIONS

Faltering political and economic conditions in Russia today have brought fear and uncertainty to much of the population. President Yeltsin's poor health and his apparent impulsive governing style have led to a general lack of confidence in the government. At the same time, nationalist groups and the Communist party appear to be gaining strength.

By failing to implement needed economic reforms, the government has permitted both the financial and political crises to persist. The August 1998 devaluation of Russia's monetary unit, the ruble, sank the exchange rate and caused many Russians to lose their savings. It also attached a tremendous price tag on imports, including food and other consumer goods. The emergency measure of printing excess money to pay back wages and pensions also caused inflation and frustration among the population to soar. Meanwhile, a bad harvest this year—considered the worst in decades—has Russians concerned about food supplies lasting throughout the winter.

III. GROWING ANTI-SEMITISM IN RUSSIA

Amidst these difficult circumstances there has developed an increased sense of insecurity among Russian Jews, who in recent months have confronted strident anti-Semitic rhetoric in the political arena on both the national and local levels and a number of highly public acts of anti-Semitic violence.

Political Anti-Semitism—National Level

On the national level, the case of Communist Party General Albert Makashov is particularly striking. As a member of the Duma, the National Parliament, General Makashov has become infamous worldwide for his anti-Semitic outbursts blaming Jews for the country's economic problems, and his advocacy of the establishment of a quota on the number of Jews allowed in Russia. He has also publicly supported the reinstatement of the Pale of Settlement, territory in which Jews were restricted to live during the 19th century.

Other outrageous pronouncements by General Makashov include an editorial by him in the Russian newspaper *Zavtra*, printed in October 1998 which stated that a "Yid," a derogatory term used in Russia to mean Jew, is "a bloodsucker feeding on the misfortunes of other people. They drink the blood of the indigenous peoples of the state; they are destroying industry and agriculture." He caused the greatest splash later in October when he led two fiery rallies, in Moscow and Samara, commemorating the 81st anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, which were repeatedly shown on Russian television. At these rallies Makashov angrily shouted "I will round up all the Yids and send them to the next world!"

The Duma has failed to explicitly censure General Makashov for his anti-Semitic remarks, and in particular for his comments calling for death to Jews. In November 1998, the Communist members blocked two different motions to censure the retired General, which had been put forward by the opposition *Yaboloko* party. Rather, the parliament adopted a vaguely worded resolution, condemning ethnic hatred, with no reference to Jews, anti-Semitism or General Makashov. The Communist party has also failed to condemn General Makashov or to discipline him. Instead, the General has found a number of vocal supporters within his party and among Russia's many nationalists.

In reaction to General Makashov's October comments and the Duma's failure to censure him, President Yeltsin requested a statement from Communist Party Leader Gennady Zyuganov regarding his party's position on anti-Semitism. Mr. Zyuganov's response reiterated the accusations made by the most anti-Semitic members of his party. In the form of a letter to the Ministry of Justice and the National Security Chief, Zyuganov's response contained harsh anti-Semitic references reminiscent of the old Soviet era and served only to heighten concerns about anti-Semitism in Russia.

The letter stated open opposition to Zionists, contending that Zionism is among the "most aggressive imperialist circles striving for world domination. In this respect it is related to fascism," and further asserted that, "Communists . . . rightly ask how it can be that key positions in a number of economic sectors were seized

by representatives of one ethnic group. They see how control over most of the electronic media—which are waging a destructive campaign against our fatherland and its morality, language, culture and beliefs—is concentrated in the hands of those same individuals.” To many, Mr. Zyuganov’s remarks came as no surprise, as he has long been known to use anti-Semitism for political gain.

In January 1999, the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) closed a criminal case against a number of Russian extremists, including General Makashov, after determining that his anti-Semitic rhetoric does not constitute criminal activity. However, in late January, Russian prosecutors launched a separate criminal case against General Makashov, seeking to convict him of inciting ethnic hatred, an offence Russian criminal code.

At the same time, many believe that General Makashov’s anti-Semitic activity has permitted other nationalists to feel free to unleash their own anti-Semitism. Indeed, some nationalist factions sharing the parliamentary majority have become increasingly willing to use anti-Semitism as a political strategy. In December, the head of the Duma’s Security Committee and Communist party member, Victor Ilyukhin, asserted at a parliamentary session that Jews were committing genocide against the Russian people. He complained that there are too many Jews in President Yeltsin’s inner circle and called for ethnic quotas in government posts to remedy the situation. In support of Ilyukhin’s anti-Semitic comments, Russia’s Human Rights Commissioner Oleg Mironov stated that ethnic Russians should have a special status in Russia. “The Russian idea [anti-Semitism] is being voiced. And it should be voiced in a country where the majority of the population is Russian.”

Local level

Krasnodar: On the local level the most outstanding case of political anti-Semitism is that of Nikolai Kondratenko, Governor of the southern Russian region of Krasnodar. For the past 2 years, residents of Krasnodar have been bombarded with his anti-Semitic rhetoric on television, at youth forums, and at mass rallies where he regularly charges Zionists with brutal oppression of ethnic Russians, and blames Jews for the political and economic problems plaguing Russia. “Today we warn that dirty cosmopolitan brotherhood: You belong in Israel or America,” Kondratenko said at a Russian Victory Day rally in March 1997.

More recently, in March 1998 at a youth Congress in Krasnodar he addressed his audience with a 2-hour speech dedicated to the “Jewish Question.” Elected on a platform of Russian patriotism, since becoming Governor, Kondratenko has transformed this position into one of ultra-nationalism, declaring that ethnic Russians are the only ethnic group which belongs in the region. Kondratenko recently won re-election in Krasnodar which will keep him in power until the year 2000.

St. Petersburg: In November 1998, the election campaign for the local legislature in St. Petersburg was loaded with anti-Semitic undertones, from anti-Semitic newspaper and television appeals to defaced campaign posters and leaflets disparaging Jewish candidates. The St. Petersburg Times reported anti-Semitic graffiti that read, “Bash Yids; Save Russia,” smeared across the wall of the campaign headquarters of a Jewish candidate, Victor Krivulin. In response, the city’s residents overwhelmingly elected liberal candidates for city council in the December run-off election. But the anti-Semitic flare-ups that characterized the campaign shocked many who had viewed the city’s population as generally well-educated.

Popular Anti-Semitism

Numerous incidents of popular or “street” anti-Semitism also took place in 1998, as they have for the past several years. It is important to note that there is no evidence of an increase in physical attacks against Jews from past years. However, these attacks, in conjunction with the mood of political anti-Semitism throughout the country, have made the Jewish community feel particularly vulnerable. Among such incidents have been the May bombing of the Marina Roscha Synagogue in Moscow; the beatings of two rabbis; a number of neo-Nazi marches in central Moscow; and the desecration of several Jewish cemeteries around the country.

For many years ultra-nationalists and anti-Semites have found a place within Russia. Neo-Nazis and Skinheads have been spreading anti-Semitic propaganda and committing violence against Jews. Currently, some 80 nationalist political parties and organizations exist in Russia, 3 of which have adopted neo-Nazi symbols, ideology and behavior. These parties disseminate copies of more than 150 different extremist periodicals, many including neo-Nazi literature, to the Russian-speaking population throughout the former Soviet Union.

For example, the virulently anti-Semitic extremist group, Russian National Unity, is a paramilitary group registered in twenty-five Russian regions. It is thought to have at least 6,000 active members and up to 50,000 non-active members and has

a presence in some of Russia's ruling bodies. At the same time the Skinhead movement in Russia, which first appeared in the mid-90's already claimed 10,000 members by 1997. In July 1998, the Russian Government proposed a ban on Nazi symbols and literature, but the legislation is still awaiting approval from the Russian Parliament. Locally, however, the Mayor of Moscow Yuri Luzhkov, a contender in the 2000 Presidential race, prohibited the National Unity from holding its convention in Moscow in December 1998.

A leader of Russian National Unity, Igor Semyonov, was sentenced in 1998 to 2 years in prison for inciting hatred toward Jews and people from the Caucasus Mountains. At the trial, a local Communist leader denied the massacre of over 33,000 Jews at Babi Yar in 1941 and a Russian Orthodox Priest testified that according to the Talmud, Jews "kill children, gather blood" and use it to make matzah. Although the judge sentenced Semyonov, no objection was made to the anti-Semitic testimonies used at the trial.

In June 1998, the Russian Government ordered the reburial of Czar Nicholas II and his family in St. Petersburg. During the preceding months, the Russian Government and the Russian Orthodox Church conducted an investigation into the killing of the Czar and his family, which included a probe into whether they perished in a "ritual murder" perpetrated by a Jewish conspiracy. The Church also published this xenophobic assertion in a final report on the death of Czar Nicholas II.

In December 1998, residents of a number of apartment buildings in the Kuban region of Krasnodar found leaflets circulated by a local fascist group in their mailboxes with the message, "Help save your dear, flourishing Kuban from the damned Jews-Yids! Smash their apartments, set their homes on fire! They have no place on Kuban territory . . . Anyone hiding the damned Yids will be marked for destruction the same way. The Yids will be destroyed. Victory will be ours!" The leaflets also called on voters to support Governor Kondratenko, known for his anti-Semitism, for president. However, citizens reacted by immediately reporting the leaflets to local authorities as an incident of anti-Semitism. Meanwhile, also in December residents of the city of Novosibirsk in Siberia found their mailboxes stuffed with anti-Semitic messages blaming Jews for the nation's economic hardships. This took place after a spurt of racial graffiti around the city and the distribution of hundreds of stickers with the slogan, "Jews are Rubbish."

At the same time, local education officials in Krasnodar recommended that an anti-Semitic book be used as a high school history textbook. "The Secret History of Russia in the 20th Century," was published with public funds, and contains anti-Semitic myths about the negative influence of Jews in Russia since the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution.

Russian Reaction

Whatever these troubled economic and political times suggest for Russia's future, during the past year the Yeltsin administration has made various efforts to work against the nationalist and extremist forces in their nation. In an historic address to the Nation on the occasion of the 57th anniversary of Nazi Germany's invasion of Russia in June 1998, President Yeltsin warned for the first time of an increasing threat to Russia by the active neo-Nazi movement. In addition, throughout the year he and other senior members of his government have condemned a number of manifestations of anti-Semitism in Russia.

In July 1998 the President again spoke out against neo-Nazism by criticizing his Justice Minister for allowing extremist and ultra-nationalist groups to receive official certification in Russia. He said that the Russian Constitution prohibits registration of such groups. In September he attended an historic ceremony for the opening of the Holocaust Memorial and Synagogue in Moscow and called for a moment of silence for those who perished in the Holocaust, while Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov presented an 18th century Torah scroll to the synagogue.

In November 1998, following the Duma debate on General Makashov's anti-Semitic remarks which ended in a failure to condemn the General, President Yeltsin issued a public statement against extremism and ethnic hatred. His top security and defense officials also met at that time with the President's Chief of Staff to discuss the growing threat of anti-Semitism and extremism in Russia.

Furthermore, a number of Jewish and liberal lawmakers have been outspoken in expressing their outrage at the new trend in political anti-Semitism ahead of the upcoming elections. Following the Duma's failure to censure General Makashov, Duma member Iosif Kobzon asked his legislative colleagues to shield him and other Jewish lawmakers from such nationalist supporters. He said, "The Duma is supposed to represent the nation. Instead it seems to be condoning Makashov and his open anti-Semitism." As Makashov supporters rallied outside the parliament build-

ing shouting anti-Semitic slogans, some Jewish and liberal lawmakers responded by walking out on the Duma session.

One particularly ardent advocate of human rights, who frequently spoke out against anti-Semitism in Russia was Galina Staravoitova, a member of the Duma and adviser to President Yeltsin on nationality issues. In November Ms. Staravoitova was assassinated, startling Russia and human rights activists worldwide. She was one of the leading voices of democracy in Russia and a true friend to the Jewish community. In fact, shortly before her death, she aggressively spoke out against General Makashov's rhetoric and criticized her colleagues for their failure to censure him. While there is no evidence that her murder was an act of anti-Semitism, it indeed underscores the political chaos and rampant, unchecked corruption raging through Russia today. During her funeral in St. Petersburg, the nationalist, anti-Semitic group The Black Hundreds, marched in front of the parliament in Moscow in support of General Makashov.

A recent poll sheds light on the popular Russian reaction toward the trend of political anti-Semitism. The independent poll taken in October in Moscow by the All-Russian Center for the Study of Public Opinion revealed that a majority of Russians agree that anyone insulting the national dignity of the Jews should be prosecuted with all the severity of the law and that it is necessary to guarantee that Jews continue to enjoy equal rights in access to institutions of higher learning. At the same time, however, the poll demonstrated that of 1,509 respondents, 52 percent would respond negatively to Jewish social-political organizations and parties operating in Russia, while 34 percent believe records should be kept of Jews holding leading positions in Russia, and that quotas should be kept on such numbers.

IV. RUSSIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY

The Jews of the Russia Federation comprise the world's third largest Jewish community, with an estimated population of 500,000–600,000. For the past several years, a revival of Jewish life has been taking place in the community, including efforts to re-establish religious and cultural life and to provide for the well-being and security of its people. Well over 100 Jewish organizations and groups operate in Moscow today. They range from religious and cultural, research and education, to charitable and welfare institutions.

The organized Russian Jewish community has taken the current precarious political situation very seriously and has expressed concern about the future well-being of the Jewish population in Russia. The Russian Jewish Congress (REK), an umbrella organization recently established to assist in rebuilding Jewish life in Russia, has met with the Russian National Security Council as well as Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov regarding the anti-Semitic statements made by General Makashov and Victor Ilyukhin. The REK succeeded in encouraging the Israeli parliament, Knesset, and the European Parliament to pass resolutions condemning the lawmakers' statements and has publicly challenged the Communist leadership. The VAAD, another Jewish umbrella group, which offers guidance and takes public stands on issues affecting the Russian Jewish community, has been increasingly active in light of the recent political atmosphere, speaking out on the issue of anti-Semitism in Russia.

As a whole, the organized Russian Jewish community has urged its members not to engage in contact with Communist Party leader Zyuganov or other Duma members who espouse or support anti-Semitic rhetoric. The community has asserted that the Communist Party should be isolated, until it rescinds its anti-Semitic manifesto and prosecutes party members who espouse anti-Semitic hatred.

V. CONCLUSION

The Anti-Defamation League and the National Conference on Soviet Jewry have called on Russian political, business, religious, educational and cultural leaders to take steps to prevent the further spread of political and other forms of anti-Semitism. ADL and NCSJ have urged these leaders to undertake a comprehensive and sustained campaign to counteract these increasingly vocal voices of intolerance and divisiveness. Such a campaign must be fought through legislation, law enforcement, education and popular culture.

While Soviet-era laws intended to combat fascist propaganda and extremism remain on the books in Russia, police and judicial enforcement and implementation of these laws are lackluster. In addition, elected officials are immune from prosecution for inciting ethnic hatred. President Yeltsin has pledged to initiate legislation to counter anti-Semitism and extremism, but the Russian Parliament, comprised largely of Communists and nationalists, is not expected to pass.

The Government of Russia must enact more precise hate-crime and hate-speech laws and enforce existing laws for all citizens, including elected officials. National and local task forces should be established to coordinate this implementation. A special unit of law enforcement should be charged with monitoring hate groups. Finally, training programs for law enforcement should be established to instruct them on how to recognize hate crimes and to sensitize law enforcement in dealing with victims of hate crimes.

Just as the United States took the lead in support of freedom for Soviet Jewry during the Soviet era, it must continue to take the lead in assisting Russia through the transition toward a democratic society. To this end, the U.S. must make it clear to the Russian Government that the U.S. expects a strong commitment to human rights and the protection of minorities.

Today the former Soviet Union's weak democratic structures, allow these manifestations of ethnic hatred and violence to go unchecked. Ultra-nationalist forces, such as those cited above, do not display concern for human rights, and demonstrate harsh views toward minority groups. The transition toward a democratic and pluralistic society in Russia continues to proceed slowly, as does the development of an appropriate infrastructure to support economic development, law enforcement and minority rights.

