
SWITZERLAND'S LEADERSHIP OF THE OSCE

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

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FEBRUARY 25, 2014

COMMISSIONERS

	Page
Hon. Benjamin Cardin, Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe	1
Hon. Christopher Smith, Co-Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe	3

WITNESSES

Didier Burkhalter, President of the Swiss Confederation, Foreign Minister and Chairman of the OSCE	6
Heidi Grau, Ambassador and Head of the OSCE Chairmanship Task Force, Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs	21

APPENDICES

Prepared Statement of Hon. Christopher Smith	28
Prepared Statement of Didier Burkhalter	30

SWITZERLAND'S LEADERSHIP OF THE OSCE

FEBRUARY 25, 2014

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

The hearing was held from 10:08 a.m. to 11:43 a.m. in Room 562, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C., Senator Benjamin Cardin, Chairman of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, presiding.

Commissioners present: Hon. Benjamin Cardin, Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe; and Hon. Christopher Smith, Co-Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Witnesses present: Didier Burkhalter, President of the Swiss Confederation, Foreign Minister and Chairman of the OSCE; and Heidi Grau, Ambassador and Head of the OSCE Chairmanship Task Force, Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.

HON. BENJAMIN CARDIN, CHAIRMAN, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Mr. CARDIN. Well, good morning. Welcome to the hearing of the Helsinki Commission. It's our great honor to have Didier Burkhalter with us today. He has many titles. He's the president of the Swiss Confederation, foreign minister—that you got to explain to me, how you're president and foreign minister—but the most important position and the reason that you're here today is that you're chair in office of the OSCE. And we thank you very much for continuing the tradition of the chair to come to Washington and appear before the Helsinki Commission.

As I think you are aware, the Helsinki Commission in and of itself is a unique organization. It was created as the implementing arm by the Congress for our participation in the OSCE. It's unique because, as you know, we have separation of branches, but in the Helsinki Commission we have both the legislative and executive branch together. We have three members of the executive branch that serve on the Helsinki Commission, in addition to members of the House and the Senate.

The chairmanship rotates. I am the chairman this year from the Senate, and Chris Smith, who is the chair in the House, will assume the chairmanship after the next elections.

It's bipartisan. As you may know, Chairman Smith is a member of the Republican Party, I'm a member of the Democratic Party, and we work together on these foreign policy issues.

I did see Spencer Oliver here, our secretary-general of OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. We are active participants in the Par-

liamentary Assembly and will want to work with you as we organize how all of the arms of the OSCE can work together to accomplish our objectives.

I also saw Andy Baker in the audience, our special representative for anti-Semitism, and it's nice to have Rabbi Baker with us also today.

Is Ambassador Baer, there you are, sitting in the front row. I was told that you were going to be here. Ambassador Baer is also here, our ambassador to the OSCE. It's a pleasure to have you here also today.

The OSCE is now reaching its 40th birthday, and of course it's time to calculate how the OSCE's incredible importance will be elevated to the next level as we re-evaluate at 40 where OSCE needs to deal with priorities.

Let me just talk a moment about the priorities of the Helsinki Commission. Throughout its history, it has promoted many priorities within OSCE. We are probably best known for our priority on tolerance. We—Congressman Smith and I—participated in the different conferences that were held in regards to anti-Semitism. We're now celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Berlin conference, in which I participated. As a result of the work of our Commission, and leadership around Europe, we established three special representatives, and Mr. Chair, I'm glad that you are continuing the tradition of having three representatives deal with the tolerance agenda.

The Commission hosted the OSCE ODIHR of people of Africa descent conference here in Washington, D.C. We found that to be a logical extension of our priority for dealing with the human rights/tolerance agenda. And of course this Commission has taken a definite interest in the concerns of the Roma population in Europe, and we would welcome your thoughts as to how we can constructively work to continue to deal with the concerns of the Roma population.

This Commission has taken on the issue of human trafficking. I want to acknowledge the incredible work of Chairman Smith not only here in the United States but globally in dealing with trafficking. As a result, we have our TIP reports here in the United States, which has been very valuable in helping us advance the end of modern-day slavery.

This Commission has put a very high priority on good governance, particularly in countries in transition. Now there's no more dynamic example of that than the current circumstances in Ukraine. We had a chance to talk about that a few moments ago, but our first priority, of course, is to re-establish order in Ukraine. We need to have a functioning government, and we need to protect the human rights of all of its citizens. It is where I think OSCE needs to use all of its tools to help bring about the proper resolution of the current crisis in Ukraine.

There are too many countries that are backsliding on their commitments to good governance. That is why this Commission has put a high priority on transparency, good governance, dealing with corruption issues in countries, many of whom have valuable resources, and we have been very much committed to transparency in dealing with good governance and fighting all forms of corruption.

I know as part of the Economic and Environmental Forum you will be including good governance, which I think is critically important. And the Helsinki framework recognizes that without human rights, you can't have security, and without human rights and security, you can't have economic and environmental commitment. So it's all interwoven into the fabric of the OSCE.

This Commission is a very active participant in the Parliamentary Assembly. I mentioned that a little bit earlier. I have had the honor of being the vice president in the Parliamentary Assembly. Currently Robert Aderholt on our Commission is the vice president on the Parliamentary Assembly, and of course Alcee Hastings, the former chair of this Commission, was the president of the Parliamentary Assembly. So we look forward to your ideas as to how we can leverage parliamentarians in the work of the OSCE.

You clearly have a very busy agenda. From the current crisis in Ukraine to the western Balkans to the Mediterranean Partnership issue, which is an area that we have paid a lot of attention to in this Commission, dealing with our partners and advancing the core values of the OSCE, our role in Afghanistan, Central Asia, the list goes on and on.

So we look forward to your testimony, let me yield to Chairman Smith for any opening comments that he would like to make.

**HON. CHRISTOPHER SMITH, CO-CHAIRMAN,
COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE**

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Chairman, thank you for calling this very important meeting of the Commission and to welcome President Burkhalter to this important Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. I've been on it now for 32 of my 34 years as a member of Congress and it has been an oasis of action, of commitment to ensuring that human rights are robustly defended.

And I look out at Spencer Oliver during some of the worst days of the Soviet Union in the 1980s, when we were working on behalf of Soviet Jewish refuseniks and so many others who are were incarcerated because of their faith or their identity simply as Jews. And he has done yeoman's work and outstanding work for years at the Parliamentary Assembly. He is a walking institutional memory. So it is so encouraging and it's always a delight to see him here. So thank you, Spencer, for your work.

Mr. President, just let me say a couple of opening comments. Obviously Ukraine is at the top of the OSCE's agenda today, and there the task is absolutely enormous. The situation remains very fragile, as we all know, and the Crimea could become a significant hot spot.

I was in the Republic of Georgia a week after the Russians rolled into Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions. I was in Tbilisi. The tanks kept making feinting moves, where they would come in as if they were going into Tbilisi. Our embassy was evacuated. And there was a sense that they weren't going to stop at the borders. And obviously to this day we all have recognized that that was a profoundly unjust invasion. And as it has been unfortunately not rolled back—but all of us are concerned that a similar pretext might be used, given the right set of circumstances, for the Russians to make a move on the Crimea.

I'm very concerned that the United States and Europe need to work closely with the Russians and supporting the Ukrainians and implementing the six-point agreement. And I want to especially thank the European Union for its leadership on that. The three foreign ministers, including Foreign Minister Sikorski, the German and French did a wonderful job in what could have far worse had they not intervened at that precise moment where the tipping point had been reached and large numbers of casualties over and above the wounded and the dead might have occurred.

Ukraine obviously is a sovereign country, but at the same time Russia clearly means to play a role in the coming months. We have to obviously factor that into all things related to Ukraine. And we need to continue working to protect Ukraine's sovereignty, its borders, and to ensure that matriculates into a more robust democracy. And we will have to engage meaningful and, I believe, respectfully with the Russians as well.

Our government has not done all that well in recent years. I hope that the OSCE will continue its work. It seems to me that the OSCE is a place where all parties could meet to support the six-point agreement. The OSCE, as a consensus organization founded to ensure respect for borders, through a concept of security that embraces human rights and the rule of law, will play a very significant role. And of course with you, Mr. President, at the helm, we have every reason to have hope and expectation that it will play that role and do it well.

Reconciliation should be at the top of the agenda. Yes, there needs to be justice. Those who have committed atrocities need to be held to account. But there needs to be also a reconciliation agenda. If reconciliation becomes the order of the day, as it did in South Africa after its decades of apartheid and the killings and the tortures went on in their prisons, as they happened in El Salvador with the FMLN and with the government that was in place, surely we need to be promoting a reconciliation agenda as well for the Ukraine.

I do believe this is a serious test for our organization. So again, I welcome your appointment, Mr. President, of a personal envoy on Ukraine, and look forward to discussing the role you envision for the envoy and the organization, including the observing of the May elections. And frankly, I hope that I and others will be able to become part of an election monitoring team for the May 25th elections.

It will be important as well to vigorously implement the addendum to the OSCE action plan on combating trafficking in human beings, which was adopted at the Kiev ministerial in December. The addendum, as you know, raises some issues that I had raised in supplementary items that were passed by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. These included calling on corporations to ensure that their supply chains do not include trafficked labor, focusing on anti-trafficking efforts on vulnerable groups like the Roma, increasing cooperation among law enforcement in different countries to prevent sex tourism, involving the trafficking of minors and calling for anti-trafficking training for the transportation of hospitality industries.

I would note parenthetically, New Jersey just served as the host for the Super Bowl. Well, I have to tell you, New York and New Jersey engaged in a very cooperative but very aggressive plan of prevention, and as a direct result, whether it be social media, training—not hospital—hotel workers to spot trafficking and to call police hotlines, many what would have been trafficking situations were mitigated. About 45 pimps and associates were arrested. Seventy victims totally were identified and rescued, 25 of whom were children, minors who otherwise would have been sexually exploited.

And actually, the police—state police and all other local police—really got into the social media side, whether it be Backpage and some of the other areas where they're selling women right online. And they intercepted it and obviously warned everyone, we're watching and we're going to arrest. I was with our New Jersey attorney general just a week and a half ago for an after action report. We worked with them throughout the whole deal. And, frankly, they did an incredible job.

And they did all kinds of training. They worked for months. And now they're going to sustain that effort because the Super Bowl is gone. Trafficking continues and I think they'll do much more. Lessons could be learned for all of us for that, because when we apply resources to make it a priority, little children and young women do not get raped and exploited by the traffickers and by the Johns who exploit them.

Another issue of deep concern for the Commission obviously is anti-Semitism, and it has been for many years. I would note parenthetically, my first trip to the Soviet Union was in '82 with the National Conference on Soviet Jewry. We met with Sharansky's mother in Moscow. We met with refuseniks in Leningrad. And I'll never forget how dire their situations were. We've been working on it as a Commission ever since to make combating anti-Semitism the highest priority.

And Rabbi Andy Baker, thank you for continuing his extraordinary service and methodically talking to governments, putting on paper as well as in recommendations what the true status of any country's record is on anti-Semitism, to try to make a difference on that. Obviously it's Berlin plus 10. We need to look at it. It doesn't mean we need a whole lot of new ideas. We need to implement and implement and implement that with maybe some new ideas that might come forward.

Let me also just say that—without objection I would like my full statement to be made a part of the record, Mr. Chairman. The last thing I'd like to mention is on the freedom of religion issue. Last June I chaired a hearing on the Syrians and the fact that so many Syrian Christians are being targeted simply because they're Christians. And we had people come and testify that said, it is genocide. Christians are not being killed as collateral damage or because they happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, but many of the rebels especially infiltrated by al-Qaida, as we all know, and al-Nusra, has been targeting Christians because they're Christians and killing them because they're Christians.

And I would hope that there would be an increased emphasis on this growing intolerance. The hearing we just had was about how

persecution against Christians are the worst in the whole world, particularly in Asia, in China, North Korea and in other parts of Asia, and certainly in the Middle East and many of our partner countries there, and even in some of the mainstream and mature democracies of the European Union.

I was in Jos, Nigeria last September; spent several days in Nigeria pushing against Boko Haram, which we all know is a horrific offshoot of al-Qaida. And they do terrible things just like the other offshoots have done, including al-Shabab in Somalia. This morning a number of people in university men, 40 is the estimation, were slaughtered, throats were slit.

Well, I met with a man while I was in Jos because they have firebombed so many churches there. And of course Nigeria is not an OSCE country or even a partner country but is part of a global trend of gross intolerance on the part of radical Islamists. And this man, who came—I met him. He was a survivor of a bombing. They came to his house, put an AK-47 to his jaw and said: You will renounce Jesus Christ and become a Muslim or we shoot you. And he said: I'm ready to meet my Maker. I will not renounce my Lord. And they shot him, right to his jaw. Obviously he's had some serious reconstructive surgery. He survived.

And I invited him and he came and testified. And he said, you Americans underestimate the vehemence and the hatred and the prejudice and the bias that this people bear Christians, and unfortunately much of the diaspora, particularly out in the Middle East, that carries some of those extremist views has made its way into many of the OSCE countries. So I would respectfully ask that there be a really robust look at that during your chair in office.

Thank you for coming and thank you for your leadership. And, Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Mr. CARDIN. All members' opening statements will be made part of the record without objection, including the president's statement will be made part of our record.

Mr. President, again, it's a pleasure to have you here. We acknowledge the members of the embassy. Your ambassador is here. He's a good friend and does a great job for you here in our country. You may proceed as you wish.

DIDIER BURKHALTER, PRESIDENT OF THE SWISS CONFEDERATION, FOREIGN MINISTER AND CHAIRMAN OF THE OSCE

Mr. BURKHALTER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Co-Chairman, ladies and gentlemen. Let me start by answering your question you asked at the beginning of your introduction, how it was possible that I was president of the confederation and at the same time minister of foreign affairs? Frankly speaking, Mr. Chairman, it happened during the last two months that I asked myself the same question.

Actually, and paradoxically, this is a result of the willingness of our nation to chair the board. We are seven members in the government. There is a rotation for the presidency each year. Every year there is a new president. In the government seven members but all main parties are integrated. The idea is to share or to integrate the main parties to the responsibilities. And the fact that we don't have any presidents that last more than one year, it is a way

to feel integrated for all parties, all great tendencies in the politics in Switzerland to feel integrated. And this is also an expression of a consensus. And I will speak to the consensus and the framework of the OSCE, which is something that works to some extent like the Swiss Confederation.

Thank you once more for the invitation to speak before your Commission. It's my very first time in Washington in my whole life, and a very nice city, I must say. And I feel it as a privilege to discuss with you and also with Vice President Joe Biden later on this day. It's a great honor. It's also an honor and a pleasure for me to address the issue of security and of Europe and security in particular. Over the past 100 years, United States has played a vital role in defending the values of liberty and security in Europe, and I wish to start by acknowledging this role. And let me maybe, Mr. Chairman, give you a personal story.

I have three sons, and my wife and I, we wanted to give them a taste of liberty—not liberty for fun but liberty for people, liberty for the societies where we live. And we wanted to do that very early, and they were teenagers. And we decided to move to Normandy to Omaha Beach, and to the American cemetery of Omaha Beach, to the sea and the beach of Omaha. And I'm convinced that my sons won't forget during their whole life what they saw, the courage they felt, the courage and the sense of liberty of the young Americans that were fighting and they were falling for another continent, for Europe. And I just would like to start to say thank you.

Coming again to the time being, the tragic developments in Ukraine in recent weeks have been sobering reminders that security in Europe cannot be taken for granted. These developments have also revealed the need to force a dialogue to rebuild trust, to reaffirm shared norms, and to consolidate bridges across the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian region. It is my firm conviction that the OSCE has a major role to play in this regard to build bridges, building bridges between East and West for the benefit of everyone.

The Swiss chairmanship wishes also to acknowledge the important role the Helsinki Commission plays within the OSCE. We also appreciate the close cooperation with the U.S. Department of State on a wide range of OSCE issues. United States is a crucial participant in the OSCE, the biggest contributor to its budget, which is a modest one. I will come back to that. And in many ways the U.S. is indispensable to move the OSCE forward.

Switzerland has agreed to take the helm of the OSCE. Why? I should say first, strategic reasons. First of all, promotion of stability in Europe and beyond is a priority of our foreign policy. We have a new strategy for 2012 to 2015, but we aim to 2022. By the way, it will be the year where we will apply for a first-time seat in the Security Council. But we have the idea to have really this security issue as a main priority for 10 years.

We also believe that we have something to offer: the neutral country. I know that neutrality is not really very well-understood in the States, but we think there is a place and an importance for a neutral country with a tradition of good offices and mediation.

The third reason, that the United States and a number of other countries asked us to take on this role. Actually we were not can-

didate at the beginning, and then it was a problem with Serbia, and in line with this problematic of Serbia being candidate for 2014, there was this idea to have a package or a situation with two consecutive chairmanships working together. And I therefore very much count on your valuable support. You supported us for taking up this chairmanship-in-office; you should support us as we have met our responsibilities. Above all, I'd like you to support our priorities.

Therefore, let me make some general remarks about the OSCE and the priorities of the Swiss chairmanship. First point, I'd like to underline that the OSCE is very important to us, simply. The fact that Switzerland is the first country to chair the OSCE for the second time indicates that we attach great importance to this organization. We value the OSCE as a forum for dialogue, a platform, a platform to generate and assist implementation of common norms and a field-based organization.

We also acknowledge that the OSCE performs its many important tasks with a surprisingly low budget. Its annual budget is not much higher than the transfer fees paid for one top-class soccer player, 145 million euro. I mean, if I calculate well, that's something like \$470 million. It's not very high for an organization with 57 member states, 11 partner states, four institutions, specialized, 16 field missions from Bosnia to Kyrgyzstan; \$170 million, it is 15 times less than the yearly expenditure of my country for the international cooperation.

That said, the OSCE is currently not in a position to tap its full potential. The fact that its membership spans three continents is a key asset, which is also a major challenge for decision-making. This is why, as chairperson-in-office, I encourage all participating states to approach the OSCE in a spirit of cooperation and compromise.

You cannot progress, Mr. Chairman, if you just want to affirm and maximize your national position. You need the spirit of consensus. And it is something like Swissness. In Switzerland we are used to look for this consensus, as I said at the beginning. If we want the OSCE to move forward, we need to be both principled and pragmatic—principled in the sense that we should all stand up for our shared values and our commitments in the OSCE, and pragmatic because no participating state will be able to see its objectives in the OSCE realized if it ignores the priorities and needs of others.

Let's remind us, in the mid-'70s the CSCE, at that time, was a success. Why? Because participants made compromises and trade-offs across the three baskets—political-military, environmental, economic and human. And today I strongly believe that if all participating states engage with a balanced approach among the OSCE's three dimensions, we will find much common ground.

The OSCE's comprehensive approach to security is a key asset of the organization and corresponds to today's security needs. Making full use of this holistic approach, of this integrated security approach, will make it possible to increase the level of security not just of states but also of citizens, and that's what precisely we Swiss want. As you are well aware as senators and members of Congress, your citizens are no longer primarily concerned about

traditional military threats. The OSCE's security approach is very much consistent with a broader security perception.

This is all the more important because the future relevance of the OSCE will much depend on its ability to produce tangible results for the individuals and communities of its participating states. Good politics, after all, is a service of the people. And like Abraham Lincoln said, I could add, by the people, for the people. This is why the leitmotif of the Swiss chairmanship is to create a security community for the benefit of everyone.

Calling for pragmatism does not mean that we should shy away from criticism in the OSCE. Recalling the OSCE's principles is more vital today than ever, especially when adherence to these principles is uncertain. I therefore encourage participating states to engage with each other in constructive ways to pave the way for shared solution rather than alienation. With its consensus-oriented political system and linguistic diversity, Switzerland is a kind of mini-OSCE. Based on our own experience, we seek to revitalize the OSCE's culture of dialogue by calling on all participants to take a step towards one another. We encourage all states to make gesture of good will, to rebuild trust and allow for progress within the OSCE.

Since assuming the chairmanship of the OSCE at the beginning of 2014, my agenda has been dominated by something which was not on the program. It was dominated by the political crisis and recent escalation of violence in Ukraine. During the past weeks, I have repeatedly called on all sides to refrain from violence, to resolve the crisis through dialogue and political means and respect human rights. In a series of meetings, I have discussed options for OSCE assistance with the then-Ukrainian government as well as with members of the opposition. The agreement reached on February 21st, you mentioned beforehand, marked an important step towards ending the violence and paved the way for a political solution of the crisis. I congratulate everyone involved who made these breakthroughs possible—like you said, the Polish chairman and French foreign minister and the special envoy of the Russian Federation.

With the appointment of an interim president by the parliament, Ukraine has now entered a new phase. It is now a new phase, a transition. Formidable challenges lie ahead. We should unite in our effort to support Ukraine in these difficult times. A stable, democratic and a united Ukraine is in the interest of all.

Against this background, I proposed yesterday during my briefing at the U.N. Security Council to establish an international contact group on Ukraine. Ukraine should, of course, play a prominent role in the group, and all international key actors should be included. We are currently consulting with the idea with all actors concerned.

The main task of the proposed contact group would be to support Ukraine in its transition period. The contact group would serve as a platform for coordination and sharing information on international assistance and project activities in Ukraine. The OSCE, through its impartiality and inclusivity, has the necessary attribute to host and moderate this group. Ukraine and all international ac-

tors involved in this crisis are, in fact, participating states of the OSCE.

I also announced yesterday my decision to appoint Ambassador Tim Guldemann as my personal envoy to Ukraine. He will coordinate all ongoing and planned activities of the OSCE in Ukraine on behalf of the chairmanship. He will rapidly take consultation with all sides and will cooperate closely with international partners.

A small OSCE core team has been sent also to Ukraine to conduct a needs assessment mission. There is an urgent need to rebuild trust among all parties involved. As I underlined yesterday at the U.N., I encourage the new leaders of Ukraine to invite ODIHR to send a human rights assessment mission to the country to establish the facts and circumstances of the incidents that took place in Ukraine. The human rights assessment mission would recommend measures to deal with serious violation of human rights allegedly committed during this crisis. Its findings would be presented in a report and would help advance national reconciliation in Ukraine.

Presidential elections will be a crucial moment in this current transitional period. We expect the Ukrainian authorities to issue an early invitation for an ODIHR election observation mission in view of the rapidly changing developments. We are also ready to review and further specify the activities of the OSCE's project coordinator's office, which is in Kiev.

We are currently witnessing a phase of de-escalation in Ukraine. It is essential to support a fair and an inclusive process of transition which does not marginalize any part of Ukraine or any community. Ukraine deserves full international attention and support. I'm convinced that the OSCE has the necessary tools to assist Ukraine in this difficult phase.

Let's move to Afghanistan, Mr. Chairman. Afghanistan is one of the OSCE's six Asian partners. It is another hot spot where the OSCE can play a valuable role. While the international community develops a strategic vision for Afghanistan after 2014, the OSCE remains a good platform for practical, forward-looking regional cooperation and dialogue among all stakeholders. We continue to work closely with other international actors to ensure stability in Afghanistan and the wider region, at least to contribute to.

OSCE activities worth mentioning in this context are police training, borders and customs training and counternarcotics. Our Central Asian field offices, the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, and the Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, are building local capacities and expert networks linking Afghanistan and the Central Asian states. We are currently also working towards establishing an OSCE research center on Afghan-Central Asian issues. In addition, ODIHR will send an election support team to Afghanistan to assist with preparation of the Afghan elections this year, and it will be, by the way, the fifth time that ODIHR will work there.

And let me now submit an idea for Asia-Pacific, for this region, Asia-Pacific. With Switzerland chairing the Asian Partner for Cooperation next year, we are eager to discuss ideas of applying elements of the OSCE's cooperative security model to East Asia. Against the background of unresolved territorial disputes, rapidly

rising defense budget and growing risks of political polarization, East Asia could well benefit from the OSCE's experience in creating confidence and common norms through dialogue and transparency. That should be interesting for members of the U.S. Congress. The zone Asia-Pacific is an economic motor and integrated region for economic reasons. But nothing or almost nothing happened at the level of subregional security platform. And I submitted this idea this year to the heads of state of South Korea and Japan, and we will see if it is possible to invent or to see something growing next year.

Ladies and gentlemen, now I would like to go over the chairmanship in office 2014 and to outline the priorities of the Swiss chairmanship. You can see in our tableau, which is a summary, in one page, one-page summary, it's something very rare in the politics, and we try to do that because that give a clear picture of what we want in a nutshell.

First, the big picture. Precisely, the Swiss chairmanship has set three other objectives. We seek to contribute to fostering security and stability, to improving people's life and to strengthening the OSCE's capacity to act. In a nutshell, our mission is to enhance security, freedom and responsibility. These three values—also Swiss and American values, in the Constitution—these three values are important, and the objectives, main objectives, they stem from these values. For each of our values and objectives, we have defined a number of priority areas. You have also received a fact sheet on these priorities, and I would like to highlight a few points here.

With regard to our first objective of fostering security and stability, the Western Balkans figures prominently on our agenda. My special representative for the Western Balkans, Ambassador Stoudmann, a former head of ODIHR, has been tasked with facilitating regional cooperation and reconciliation.

I plan to visit this region in the coming months. The OSCE should play a supporting role in the implementation of the Belgrade-Pristina agreement. Indeed, the OSCE has recently facilitated local elections in northern Kosovo and will continue to monitor this year's electoral processes in southeastern Europe.

Let me add that we have arranged with Serbia, the next chairmanship in office, that Ambassador Stoudmann will be reappointed next year, will be so a Swiss ambassador and special representative for the Western Balkans during the Serbian presidency in 2015.

I'm also planning to travel to the South Caucasus. My special representative for this region, Ambassador Gnadinger, who will also be reappointed next year by the Serbian presidency, is co-chairing the Geneva international discussions on the conflict in Georgia. His discussions are a unique, albeit fragile, platform to tackle the security and humanitarian aspects of the conflict. It is our hope that they will one day evolve into a forum that lays the grounds for a real settlement of the conflict.

Nagorno-Karabakh is one of the most dangerous conflicts in Europe. One of my first meeting as chairman in office was with the three co-chairs of the Minsk Group. I wish to emphasize that this bond, both in Karabakh and in Georgia, United States involvement at the highest political level would be helpful for our efforts. I'm

convinced that the stalemate in these protracted conflicts can only be overcome with greater engagement and attention by international key players such as the United States. We very much appreciate the work of Ambassador Warlick, U.S. co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, and of Deputy Assistant Secretary Eric Rubin, the U.S. representative in the Geneva discussion.

Conventional arms control, Mr. Chairman, and confidence and security building measures play a key role in joint efforts to strengthen military stability, transparency and predictability in this OSCE area. Yet while the need for conventional arms control remains undisputed, the Treaty on Conventional Arms Forces in Europe has reached an impasse. Conventional arms control in Europe can likely only be relaunched on the basis of a new conceptual approach. This will require many countries to modify long-held positions. We should also seek ways to ensure that unresolved territorial conflict do not block progress on banning regional arms control. All this will require initiative and leadership by the United States. The Swiss chairmanship regards the OSCE as a useful marketplace for ideas on conventional arms control. We are ready to facilitate conceptual discussion in this respect.

These were, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Co-Chairman, some comments about the first column on our tableau. Let's move now to the second.

As for our second objective of improving people's lives, implementation of all existing commitments in the human dimension is a key priority for us. As the co-chairman just said before, implementation, implementation, and implementation. We have defied and prepared our activities in this area on the basis of our two years' experience as chair of the human dimension committee. We aim to strengthen the implementation of commitments in full cooperation with the participating states, with the OSCE structures and with the civil society. So our focus is not in having new commitments, our focus is clearly about respecting the current commitment, giving assistance to member states for monitoring and improving the situation.

Switzerland will host a chairmanship event on human rights defenders in Berne, our capital, in June. On this occasion, the director of ODIHR, Ambassador Lenarcic, will present guidelines prepared by ODIHR on the protection of human rights defenders. I should add I visited ODIHR in Warsaw at the end of January and that recruiting a successor for Mr. Lenarcic will be another major task in 2014. We now have had the application time till the 6th of February. We have four candidates. A good situation is possible. We have candidate from Germany, from Latvia, from Czech Republic and from Iceland.

The Swiss chairmanship will also put the issue of torture back on the agenda of the OSCE. We are planning an event on torture prevention in Vienna at the beginning of April. Cooperation between national mechanisms, NGOs, persons, international organizations, the U.N. and the OSCE will be at the center of the discussions at this event. Preventing of torture will be clearly a priority for respecting the commitment precisely.

Another theme, the fight against human trafficking, hundreds of thousands of people, mainly women and children, are being force-

fully trafficked in their own countries and across national borders. These victims are often sexually exploited or forced into slavery. This is a terrible crime. And I wish to commend Co-Chair Smith for the three comprehensive bills you authored in the United States to combat trafficking to help victims.

A week ago, the Swiss OSCE chairmanship together with the Austrian chairmanship of the Council of Europe organized a conference against trafficking human beings. The goal was to discuss how legally binding standards, monitoring mechanisms and political strategies can mutually reinforce each other and lead to effective action to counter trafficking in human beings. It was a success with a lot of participants and a strong testament that human trafficking remains on the top of the agenda.

As for the priority of more reliable management of natural disasters, this is very much in the interest of the security and safety of our citizens. Disasters can hit anywhere at any time. And the United States knows from its own experience that the scale, frequency and severity of disasters triggered by natural hazard will continue to grow at an accelerating pace. Senator Cardin, Congressman Smith, you witnessed with your own eyes the destructive force of Tropical Cyclone Sandy in October 2012. You visited the impacted areas on Maryland's Eastern Shore and New Jersey, where over 30 of your compatriots lost their lives and where 357 housing units were damaged, causing economic losses of well over \$30 billion.

Switzerland considers that disaster risk reduction should be firmly embedded in the sustainable development goals. Our aim must be to move from a disaster response to a disaster prevention and climate change mitigation. There is a lot on our plate for that. We'll address this issue at the meetings of the second OSCE economic and environmental forum. In so doing, we seek to contribute to societies becoming resilient to climate change and disaster risk.

There is also a strong link between the human the political-military dimensions of the OSCE in combatting transnational threats. For instance, this year we are tackling issues such as human rights in countering terrorism, kidnapping for ransom that we have to fight against at an international level, and the return of foreign fighters, which could become a major issue after the Syrian conflict.

A major opportunity to do so will be the annual OSCE conference on counterterrorism, which will take place in Interlaken in my country. We are counting on the presence of American experience at the Interlaken conference and on your continued support in tackling these issues. And I would be interested to have your point of view about these topics of counterterrorism, kidnapping for ransom, return of foreign fighters in the discussion after on—later on.

In the area of cyberthreats, the Swiss chairmanship will focus on the implementation of the initial set of OSCE confidence-building measures agreed last year. And at that place I would like to acknowledge the successful work of the U.S. chair of Ambassador Baer. Thank you very much for having worked very efficiently, U.S. chair of the informal working group. The Swiss chairmanship is grateful that the United States accepted to continue to chair this working group and will support its efforts to develop additional

confidence-building measures. Let me also add that we will hold an OSCE-wide conference on drugs in October in Vienna.

And now, regarding our third objective of strengthening the OSCE's capacity to act, the Helsinki +40 process is of particular importance. Adapting the OSCE to the security needs of the 21st century is both challenging and vital. This process is in itself an important confidence-building measure if it helps address divergent security perspective in a result-oriented manner. But it should be more than that, as Helsinki +40 is about defining the ways and means of the OSCE, and hence its future relevance. There are no road maps. There are also aid coordinators in place to structure these discussions in Vienna. Again, participating state will need to show a degree of flexibility for this process to translate into meaningful results.

I also believe that we need ministerial level debates to get the solid idea of where the OSCE should be heading. Numerous issues are being addressed in the context of Helsinki +40. Let me mention here one issue where the Swiss chairmanship would particularly appreciate your support, U.S. support. I'm referring to the need to improve the effectiveness of OSCE field operations. These field operations have proven very valuable in assisting host countries in implementing their commitments. But they have increasingly come under pressure in a number of countries, the fact that we cannot maintain field operation with far-reaching mandates against a will of host countries. This is why it is important to achieve a balance of OSCE activities that takes into account the interest of the host state. Support for the United States for this discussion will have to carry them forward. For instance, we can move here or there from a specifically third basket mission to a more balanced mission with element of the second basket.

As for the other means of rendering the OSCE more effective, I would argue that the model of consecutive chairmanship, as carried out by Switzerland and Serbia, has already proven its merit. Berne and Belgrade have developed joint work and implementation plans. We have also agreed that our special representative would be re-appointed by the end of this year. As I said, consecutive chairmanship can provide the OSCE with more continuity for the future, and support of the U.S. would be welcome.

Linked to the Helsinki +40 debates is the Swiss priority of strengthening the OSCE's role in mediation. The peaceful settlement of disputes that was included in the Helsinki final act remains one of the core tasks of the OSCE today. This is why we are contributing to the mediation support capacity that is currently being built in the OSCE secretariat. The aim is to capture knowledge about mediation processes and make sure that OSCE mediators are supported with training and expertise. In this regard, I wish to acknowledge the important assistance provided by the United States Institute of Peace and the Conflict Management program at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.

The Swiss Chairmanship attaches great importance to our final priority of enhancing involvement of civil society and in particular of young people. Young people are also the main priority of the presidency of Switzerland this year. We firmly believe that offering

a platform for a dialogue with civil society contributes to assisting OSCE institution in participating states in implementing commitments.

It also provides an opportunity for our governments to listen and to respond to the needs of our citizen once more, by the people, for the people. Four original workshops are being organized in four different regions of the OSCE in the coming months. The first workshop is recently taking place these days in Belgrade. The two topics identified by civil society at the most pressing issue were torture prevention and hate crime and hate speech, the latter with a particular focus on Roma and Sinti.

It was an inspiring start to our workshop series, and the next destinations for this workshop being Austria, Tajikistan and Georgia. The recommendations resulting from this process should feed into the final (city ?) society conference that will be held in parallel to the Minister Council in Basel in December 2014, this year.

Finally, there is something very important in our chairmanship—our use of Security and Cooperation in Europe Project, which brings together 57 young people from all 57 OSCE participating states. The project is particularly dear to me as our shared responsibility as politicians is to shape a more prosperous, equitable and sustainable future for the generation to come.

In the course of this year, our youth ambassadors will simulate a whole OSCE negotiation cycle, last month assimilating for the first time a permanent council meeting in Vienna. I also invited three of these youth ambassadors to already address the real permanent council that met in the Hofburg Palace in Vienna. There were applause for them, and it's the very beginning of their work.

In July, a ministerial council meeting will be simulated in Belgrade. The purpose of these meetings is to negotiate a youth action plan with recommendation for the OSCE and its participating states. The youth ambassadors will present their action plan at the ministerial council in Basel; it will be supportive, which I hope will serve as an inspiration for the OSCE to work out its own action plan for youth next year.

Mr. Chair, ladies and gentlemen, let me conclude my statement by a great thanks to you, thanks to the United States for your continued commitment to the OSCE, of an institution complementary to NATO. The OSCE constitutes America's second foothold in Europe. It is a bridge between the Euro-Atlantic and the Eurasian region. The stronger the bridge, the stronger our common security. Thank you very much for your support.

Mr. CARDIN. Well, Mr. President, thank you for your very comprehensive outline of your priorities for chair and office. As you were explaining the dual role you hold as president and minister, I first thought that was just a budget-saving matter for your country but now with your explanation, I fully appreciate that.

And you for a one-page summary. That does help us. You're right; our attention spans cannot take too much more than that. But that's—I appreciate the conciseness of the priorities that you have spelled out here. And I agree with your title—"Principled and Pragmatic." That's OSCE—a consensus organization. You need to be able to bring about consensus among very different countries.

That requires pragmatism, but OSCE is built upon principle, and principles are very important.

So let me challenge you on how you are going to proceed under that banner as it relates to Ukraine, recognizing that Russia will play a very important role. The United States and the international community has been working with Russia and Syria with some success, although it's been a challenge to maintain our principles, recognizing the need to get broader support. How do you see the future of the Ukraine as an independent country, recognizing the role that Russia is currently playing?

Mr. BURKHALTER. You always find a lot of people saying that is not possible for making summary in one page, but I think it is always possible to go to the essential, and politics is also to find a way to go the essential. About your second comments and questions, we have to be principled and pragmatic, and the question is, are we able to find not only balance but a common balance between principled and pragmatic? Because we have to be principled and pragmatic together. And there is another conception of being principled and pragmatic in all the countries of the OSCE.

With Russia, we tried to build on the good relations we have developed from my country, not as chair of the OSCE but from my country with Russia. In the last years, we have to have a lot of contacts, because we had to assume or achieve the mediation for helping Russia to become a member of the WTO.

And this gave the possibility to build a relation and to build a dialogue in a lot of issues with Russia, and therefore, we think that we can give help and be helpful in this difficult situation for finding a solution in a political—an inclusive solution, which will be very difficult in Ukraine with a dialogue with Russia and not without that dialogue with Russia, because we are strongly convinced that there will be no solid and lasting solution if we don't find it with the main actors, and with Russia in particular.

Mr. CARDIN. Well, I thank you for that. They make decisions a lot quicker than we do in Vienna. So you might want to get some suggestions on how consensus can move towards decision-making from our young people. They might help us in that regard.

You mentioned that your country was willing to step in and take on the leadership of OSCE. It's the second time and the first country to take on the burden for a second time, recognizing that Serbia was one year from becoming the chair in office, and we do have representatives of the Serbian embassy here with us today, and we thank them for being here.

It seems to me it does present a unique opportunity with your priority on the Western Balkans and the agreements that key people from OSCE will remain in for the two-year period. Can you just expand a little bit more as to how we can move forward during your chairmanship and transition to Serbia, which will have a unique opportunity to demonstrate statesmanship in dealing with long-time problems?

Bosnia, by now, we thought we'd be at the next plateau, and we're not. We're still under an interim government structure that everyone understands will need some constitutional reform for their ability to transition fully into Europe. Kosovo is still not resolved. How do you see your chairmanship working with the Ser-

bian government next year to be able to make significant progress on the Western Balkans?

Mr. BURKHALTER. First of all, I would like to add something I didn't say before during my intervention, that we will have the Swiss ambassadors reappointed, but we will also have a Serbian ambassador as special representative reappointed; it is for the Transnistrian conflict. That shows, really, that we work totally together in order to find the best ways to ensure this continuity, and also, the implementation of the joint action plan—we decided to move together.

About the Western Balkans—as I said, we have three main priorities. First of all, regional cooperation—and we will work in the frame of the Regional Cooperation Council as well for this regional cooperation. In looking for the ways to aim at a good result in regional cooperation, I must say that European Union has done a fantastic job in the last time. The dialogue in Belgrade is a real progress, and we want to support that.

And this model of the European Union is very strong, also, for Serbia. That is the first point. The second point is minority protection. We will try to work a lot in that sense, and also, linked with reconciliation, the issue of missing persons as far as—is of utmost importance, and we would like to progress along that way, because we think that if we can use—seize the opportunity of this consecutive chairmanship for having real progress in the frame of the reconciliation, then we will have done a very good job, I think.

And I told you that before as it was not official, but I say it now once more. And there is also maybe for Serbian presidency, an interest to show, during this year of chairmanship, this capacity to be a motor for reconciliation. It will be difficult, but the interest of having a successful presidency is big, and can be a good advantage if we see this—those things with a constructive manner.

Mr. CARDIN. Thank you. We've been working on the tolerance agenda for a long time, and significant progress has been made. Best practices have been identified on dealing with anti-Semitism, on dealing with anti-Muslim activities and dealing with xenophobia. We have had conferences that have looked at best practices. As Chairman Smith pointed in his opening comments, yes, we're open for new ideas, but it's now about accountability and following through on commitments that have been made where we show leadership.

In recent years, there has been a disturbing trend of increased activities in bigotry. How do you see your chairmanship focusing on how we can advance the human rights agenda—the tolerance agenda, which is—to me, is what OSCE is best known for internationally? How do you see your year initiating and following through on a better understanding of all people of the OSCE regions?

Mr. BURKHALTER. I think this is, above all, work that we have to move on the ground, and therefore, the special representative on tolerance and nondiscrimination are very important to us. We have already met them, and we want to build on their job. I think you have also invited them for coming in front of the Commission and discussing with you. I would suggest that you wait some months before having this discussion, because two of them are new, and they can build on their experience this year for making a review

and a report to you of their activities on the ground. But we will work above all with them direct on the ground.

Mr. CARDIN. Thank you. And I appreciate your response to my letter in that regard for the three representatives as we look forward to having them before the Commission.

Mr. BURKHALTER. You're welcome.

Mr. CARDIN. I just want to highlight one area that we have made a high priority on our Commission, and that deals with transparency on corruption. We are strong believers in the transparency initiative on extractive industries, and we have passed legislation requiring our extractive industry companies to make certain disclosures on the exchange. And Europe has followed suit with certain legislation. I just really would urge your chairmanship to expand upon the need for transparency with companies that do business in countries where it is questionable whether the governmental revenues are ending up for public purpose or for funding corruption. I think OSCE can play a major role here. I'm going to urge you to make that a priority of your chairmanship.

Mr. BURKHALTER. I share this point of view, and we have to be very concerned and very active at the same time about everything which is linked to corruption, and we have to fight against everything which is linked to corruption. And it is also not only the opinion of this chairmanship in office but also for my country.

Mr. CARDIN. I'd like to make two other observations. Then I'm going to turn the gavel over to Chairman Smith. We have votes starting at 11:15 on the floor of the United States Senate, so I'm going to have to leave during Chairman Smith's questioning, but I want to make two other observations.

First, thank you for your comments in regards to the natural disaster in our states. It was a devastation, particularly New Jersey, but Maryland got hit very hard on the eastern shore. And these are now the new norms, these types of extreme weather conditions. And we can argue about the science as to—I don't think we can argue about the science. We can argue about the causes. We're all but set to take steps in order to deal with the—with carbon emissions. But one thing we need to have—I don't think there's any debate—is we have to deal with adaptation. We've got to deal with the realities of the current circumstances and how we respond to keep people safe.

And I think OSCE can play a very important role, and I was pleased to see that as part of your priorities for your chairmanship. And I can tell you, we have a group in the United States Senate that meets weekly on this subject, so we'd be glad to try to help provide support for your agenda in dealing with these natural disasters and how we can be better prepared to deal with it. We also think we need to deal with climate and OSCE is dealing with the climate issues as well.

You mentioned your role in Asia, and I just really want to underscore one other point, if I might, and that is when President Park was here from the Republic of Korea she pointed to an OSCE-type process for Northeast Asia as a way of having dialogue between countries that have had a difficult past. Two of America's closest allies are the Republic of Korea and Japan, yet the relationship between Japan and the Republic of Korea is not as good as it needs

to be. And of course China represents a unique challenge in that part of the world, and North Korea is a real danger to regional and global security.

The OSCE process could very well help them deal with better dialogue among themselves, and in talking with the governments of China, Korea and Japan, they all agreed. I mention that to you because I think your role in Asia being so strong, during your chairmanship you might be able to expand our partners in some way to take advantage of the principles of OSCE for a more stable Asia. And I applaud you for your activism globally as well as within the OSCE direct regions.

With that, I'm going to turn the gavel over to Chairman Smith. And once again, thank you very much not just for being here but for your willingness to take on this responsibility during a critically important time, not only again for Europe and Asia but also I think globally the work that you do will have great consequences. And we clearly want to be your partner and do everything we can to help.

Mr. BURKHALTER. Thank you very much.

Mr. SMITH. I want to thank the chair again for this important hearing. And you did provide, Mr. President, very comprehensive testimony and the answer to a number of the questions that I know I and other Commissioners had, but I do have a few additional, if I could pose them to you.

You know, back in 2002, at a hearing of our Commission, I—joined by Senator Voinovich and of course Chairman Cardin and others—recommended that a high-level OSCE meeting occur on combating anti-Semitism. Ambassador Minikes, like Ambassador Baer, was in the audience. He called down to the White House—because we had already had, in the OSCE PA, a number of what we called sidebar events where we focused on combating anti-Semitism, and there was no doubt there was a rising ever-escalating problem in our own countries, including the United States, with combating anti-Semitism. Ambassador Minikes got a very strong thumbs-up from the Bush administration, and immediately there was a mobilization to make it happen.

And of course we first had the Vienna conference and then the watershed conference in Berlin in 2004. I remember sitting at that. I was the co-lead for the delegation. At that and others we had very high-level people, including Ed Koch, the former mayor of New York, Colin Powell, and many others at these different conferences bringing the gravitas of some of our top people in the diplomatic community and the political community, to bring that sharp focus on combating anti-Semitism. And of course countries throughout all of Europe did the exact same thing.

A very fine listing of recommendations was made. We in the OSCE PA constantly harkened back to the Berlin recommendations as to how well are we doing. You know, what is ODIHR getting in terms of monitoring? And of course Rabbi Baker does a wonderful job going country to country to hold countries to account. He does it in a very, very disarming way, straightforward but very effectively.

My question would be about a commemorative event, which I think is eminently doable. I know you're looking at it and I certainly hope, you know, under your chairmanship perhaps in July,

maybe after we all meet in Baku, at the end of that when we're out of session and both House and Senate members are free to travel—we can't travel when we have votes. It's just our—our rules and regulations, at least on the House side.

You know, if it happens without us, that's fine, but we'd love to be there. But if you could give every consideration to that kind of commemorative event to really bring a great deal of, OK, 10 years ago, watershed event; how well or poorly have we done? What remains to be done to combat this millennium-long insidious hatred towards Jewish people and towards Jews?

Mr. BURKHALTER. Maybe just two or three comments.

First of all, we had, last year in Tirana an event—a high-level event about tolerance and nondiscrimination, and we would welcome this year another event, but it's not yet in the agenda. We have to work on it and find a good solution, but it will be important that it attracts a high level of participation and not an event more without any—any great results. It is important to organize that and to find a solution logistically and financially, which is not the case until now—up to now.

Mr. SMITH. Well, I know Ambassador Baer is very supportive of it, just like Ambassador Minikes was 11 years ago, or 12 years ago in 2002. So whatever could be done, it would be greatly appreciated and would move that ball forward. It is getting worse, just like the intolerance towards Christians, which is now getting onto a lot of people's radar as an escalating evil. Well, anti-Semitism is certainly. So I thank you for your willingness to really take a good, hard look at that.

Let me ask you—obviously you have been appointed as the special rep on combating racism, xenophobia and discrimination, also focusing on tolerance and discrimination against Christians and other religions. A couple of questions in that regard.

Intolerance and discrimination against Christians is a phenomenon that is recognized by the OSCE, and it is on the increase in Europe and even in the United States. The OSCE held an expert roundtable on intolerance and discrimination against Christians in Vienna on March 4th, 2009, and the Parliamentary Assembly adopted a resolution on combating intolerance and discrimination against Christians at the OSCE PA in Belgrade in July of 2011.

The OSCE PA decided to intensify efforts to monitor research and publicize the need to fight against intolerance and discrimination and intensify consultation and cooperation with the personal rep of the chair in office on a national and international level. Let me ask you, if I could, a couple of questions with regards to that.

I know that further action has been taken by the personal rep, for example, convening an expert roundtable on intolerance and discrimination against Christians in Vienna in 2014, five years after the first meeting. Can you tell us how his efforts might be enhanced by your chairmanship?

Secondly, can the OSCE produce guidelines in parental rights and education? Under the Spanish chairmanship in 2007, the OSCE produced the Toledo Guiding Principles on Teaching about Religions and Belief in Public Schools. However, further guidelines are needed to emphasize the rights of parents in the field of edu-

cation. Parental rights are under attack in an unprecedented way among several OSCE-participating states.

In a growing trend, parents are being given less and less say in how they can educate their children, while at the same time, state education has become increasingly more radicalized.

In Germany, for example, 14 Christian parents were imprisoned, some for more than 40 days, and most on multiple occasions, simply for opting out that their 9- and 10-year-olds—children from two days of mandatory sex education classes. One of the hallmarks of American education is that there is an opt-out capability. If that's what parents want, that's what parents can do. In Germany, many of these parents have gone to jail.

Also in Germany, a 15-year-old girl was placed in a mental institution for wishing to be home-educated. And we know that issue, you know, home education, home schooling is a trending issue here in a positive way. It is increasingly being criminalized in the OSCE space, particularly in places like Germany.

There was also a case where in Sweden, a 7-year-old boy was taken off a plane bound for India by police and social services simply because he was home-educated. Now, I've been reading these cases and becoming alarmed—not just concerned, but alarmed about this trend. And it certainly is antithetical to any concept of freedom and parental rights, and I would hope, you know, you would take a good, strong look at this, if you would.

And finally, follow-up initiatives being planned for the publication of the ODIHR guidelines on the recognition of religious or belief communities. Where is the status of that?

Mr. BURKHALTER. Thank you very much, Mr. Smith, for this very interesting question. They are also very specific, and I would give the floor to my alternate for giving a complete answer to these interesting questions, Mrs. Ambassador Grau, chief of the task force, OSCE.

HEIDI GRAU, AMBASSADOR AND HEAD OF THE OSCE CHAIRMANSHIP TASK FORCE, SWISS FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mrs. GRAU. Mr. Co-Chair, I'm happy to react to some aspects of your question. I'm not going into all the details. What we would try to do or to achieve this year—and this is something that could really have a direct influence on the quality of the work of all the three tolerance representatives, including the one that is responsible for Christians—is what we call the institutional setup. Our feeling is that these three representatives do not yet have the full support for the work that they would need coming from ODIHR side. I think it is absolutely essential that we manage to upgrade, improve the support structures that they should have for the organization of their traveling, but also on substance, keeping records, support them in each and every manner. And we are working on that. This is hopefully making progress this year still. It's very much also linked to ODIHR, the support that should come from ODIHR to these representatives.

Again, maybe also on the country visits, that is very important. In that regard, what we would like to have this year is make it possible that the tolerance representatives will get invitation of the

three countries they are coming from. So the U.S. already has issued an invitation, and we are very appreciative of that. What we would like to see is also an invitation coming from Turkey, the—kind of the host country of one of the representatives, and then a third invitation hopefully coming from Russia. And we are working on that. This is also in a way a political decision that the countries have to make. But I think that would greatly advance the work and also the attention to the work of these representatives.

Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you. And if you could get back with some additional answers to the very specific questions on home schooling and children whose parents opt them out and the criminalization of those decisions by parents—you know, in terms of children's rights, I actually wrote and gave, with U.S. Department of State clearance after I wrote it, the Bushes' position on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. I was a special rep to the U.N. at the time in New York. So I take a backseat to no one for recognition of the importance of children's rights and respect for children, but there's also a balance and countervailing issue of parental rights and the importance of who is the chief mentor for a child. And if governments increasingly usurp that and deem home schooling as a criminal offense, that is absolutely outrageous, and I think it cuts against a human rights perspective. So if you could get back specifically on some of those questions, I would—and the Commission would deeply appreciate it.

Let me ask you, with regards to media freedom and press freedom, can the representative of the freedom on media revisit the issue of criminal libel and insult laws in Europe? As you know, in 2004 the representative on freedom in the media produced a document entitled "Ending the Chilling Effect: Working to Repeal Criminal Libel and Insult Laws." We talked about it often in this Commission. We talked about it at the PA. It was an excellent blueprint for action. The publication followed a round table in Paris in 2003. Ten years on from this publication, very little progress has been made. Many countries in Europe continue to limit speech to an extraordinary degree. For example, again in Germany, committing an insult is a criminal offense with a one-year prison sentence. However, the United Kingdom, to its credit, repealed its insult law in 2013, demonstrating that progress can be made in this area.

Also in the area of press freedom, many of us are really, really concerned about a deterioration of press freedom throughout the country and throughout the world. Reporters Without Borders, a group that I highly esteem and have had testify at many of my hearings on the Foreign Affairs Human Rights—Subcommittee on Human Rights that I chair, have come out with their rankings, and I was shocked and dismayed and disappointed that the United States now is 46 on their index. At 44 is Papua New Guinea; 45 is Romania; 46, United States of America; 47, Haiti; 48, Niger, just to give it some kind of context. So there is a concern that journalists are increasingly being subjected to censorship, to prior restraint out of fear of some kind of action being taken against them. And again, these libel laws, these—the insult laws that, again, Germany still backs have an absolute chilling effect on a robust in-

quiry and the ability to ask the tough questions of politicians and all others.

So could there be a follow-up on the 2003 effort, you know, a re-issue, a more robust effort to ensuring freedom of the press?

Mr. BURKHALTER. We are fully aware about the importance of freedom of media. I can just also add that in the very actual current issue of Ukraine, the special representative of freedom of media plans a country visit in the next weeks, and also at the same time, there should be also a visit of the high Commissioner on the minority protections.

About freedom of expression, we will work very closely during our whole year of presidency with the special representative of freedom of media. She made a very good job, and she will make in the future also a very good job, we are sure of it. And we have also supplementary human dimension meeting on the freedom of expression, which will take place in Vienna during the month of July. Then we have already a series of events or of activities in that case and in that field.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you. If I could, just a couple final questions, Mr. President. And thank you for, again, your extensive testimony and answers.

With regards to the Ukraine, what—I know you spoke about it, and I appreciate that, but just a—some final insights or comments as to what role do you think the OSCE can play, particularly in bringing Russia into an effort to ensure that the bloodshed does not re-erupt? We all know that this isn't over by far. Even though it looks like the immediate problems in Kiev have abated, there are flare-ups that are going to occur in all kinds of areas. And it could happen with provocation, obviously, from Moscow.

Are you planning any kind of special initiatives, like a visit to the Crimea, for example, which I think, just like Abkhazia and South Ossetia, when pushed terrible react, but that's what the Russians did. Who knows what they might do with regards to the Crimea. And what would be your recommendation to us, the United States of America, Congress and the president, as to what we should be doing vis-à-vis Ukraine?

Mr. BURKHALTER. Beside everything I already said about the Ukraine, you're right that a special initiative, which shall be good organized, in the direction of Crimea is—are very important. We plan to have a visit of our special envoy, Ambassador Tim Guldemann. And at the same time, it will be very important to have what I said before, this visit of the high Commissioner on national minorities.

Once more, I would like to underline the fact that clear U.S. support to the OSCE actions—the proposal of the international contact group and the decision of sending a special envoy and the need assessment mission—during these days would be very important for us and for the OSCE to be efficient and to give real assistance to this aim we all have, finding a political-inclusive solution.

Mr. SMITH. Just let me ask you, if I could, on trafficking. Last year we did ask—I asked the chair in office if they would make trafficking a serious part of their agenda. They did. The chair in office who sat where you sat—sit now, who has recently been, obvi-

ously, sacked, actually had a huge conference in June in Kiev. And it was an excellent conference.

And one of the focuses was the training of flight attendants, buses, trains—you know, the people involved with transportation because every trafficking victim, or almost every one of them, are transported at some time in their enslavement. And eyes and ears are on every aircraft, if they're properly trained, situationally aware. Tell the pilot and the pilot then tells law enforcement, who then separate.

And there were dozens of examples given in testimony at a hearing that I had again just a few weeks ago. Delta Airlines is doing it. I'm sorry to say some of our other airlines are not—like American, which is—you know, we've asked them repeatedly, we asked them to be at the hearing. And for no cost—or absolutely a de minimis amount of money they can do this kind of training.

And what happened in Ukraine was that there was a training of the flight attendants. And the enthusiasm with which they embraced this—some many, as you know, of the Ukrainian women are trafficked into the Middle East, where they think they're going to be waitresses and they are put into brothels and they are horribly exploited.

Would you consider making such a continuance effort of that training? We passed, as Spence remembers, a parliamentary assembly recommendation. It is in the addendum which came, we think, in part out of our request. And thank you, Ambassador Baer, for fighting so hard for that in December.

This is a low-cost, highly efficacious way of training those eyes and ears to say: That doesn't look right. They have all kinds of ways of doing it in a nonconfrontational way. And they will save lives. And it'll also have a potential chilling effect on how the bad guys move these women.

One of the great takeaways from the recent Super Bowl, was that because there was so much preventive aspects done, particularly in the training of hospital employees and the trains—Amtrak, for example, and the top cop for Amtrak testified at my hearing just a few weeks ago—they said: We're serious about this. If they're not a plane, they could be on a train, the buses are still laggards so they need to be involved in this.

But we can shut these people down and make it harder and harder and harder for these nefarious enterprises to do the horrible things they do. So if you would seriously consider—you know, obviously it's an addendum item that was passed, but make it a priority, please. I know you care about it, but I know you have so many balls in the air. You'll save lives by doing it.

I mean, Swiss Air could do it. Obviously we have Delta, but our others have not done it and that's shocking. Homeland Security has put together an excellent packet called blue lightning, lays out best practices. Nancy Rivard. We've invited her to other parts of the world. She's gone. She was in Kiev.

And she says: Look, we saw little kids coming out of Haiti—it was a pedophile ring. And 80 kids, according to her estimations, were sold into the cruelest exploitation imaginable. They broke that up. Law enforcement got involved. And they shut that thing down like it was a tourniquet. And of course, they held the bad

guys to account. She told another example of a Moscow to Chicago flight that was—you know, there were all these young, Russian girls, time and time again, five, six of them per flight, with some guy. And they said there's something wrong.

In the past they would have went, oh, not my business, look away, look askance. And finally they got involved because they were trained. And they broke up that ring because when they got onto a bus after being offloaded in Chicago, that was the last anybody heard of those girls who thought they were going to be waitresses or even models somewhere, or au pairs. So it's a low-cost, highly efficacious way of saving women's lives, if you could consider that.

Mr. BURKHALTER: Thank you, Mr. Co-Chairman, for your enthusiasm and for your engagement, commitment in fighting human trafficking. As I said before, it is a—to recognize what you have personally done in this field. We have decided, generally speaking, to let and to do so that the issue of human trafficking remains very clearly at the top of the agenda. We have already during these first months of presidency and in collaboration with the Council of Europe demonstrated it was possible to mobilize not only one organization but a series of them. And I'm sure that we can make some progress during the whole year in this important field. For the details and modalities, I would like to give the floor to Mrs. Grau.

Mrs. GRAU. Yeah, thank you, Mr. Co-Chair. And I would like to join my president in praising your engagement for this really important issue. What I think is also important to keep in mind that this is an issue that all the participating states of the OSCE are in full agreement that this has to be countered and we have to fight against it. So I think it's quite unique that all the countries agree on the importance of a specific issue and show commitment on that.

What is important is also the work of the field missions in that regard. We try to support them wherever possible in very practical examples of fighting against trafficking. The example that you just mentioned I think is a very valid one, a very important one. There is another example of joint work, of cooperation between Switzerland and the U.S. in the OSCE framework, where we fight together against domestic servitude in diplomatic households.

This is, I think, for your country with a big diplomatic community here in Washington but also as well in New York, as well as for our country with Geneva, the international Geneva, of course, a very important topic. And that is an initiative that we would like to continue this year. This month, still, there should be a workshop, a training, in Brussels. But there are many other ways how we can join forces and support this important cause. And once again, I would like to thank you for your engagement.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you so very much. And thank you both. Was there anything else you would like to add before we conclude? Thank you for your time as well, because I know you're a very busy man.

The hearing's adjourned and we'll look forward to working with you going forward.

APPENDICES

PREPARED STATEMENTS

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. CHRISTOPHER SMITH, CO-CHAIRMAN,
COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

I would like to warmly welcome His Excellency President Didier BURKHALTER. We all look forward to hearing your plans for your 2014 chairmanship of the OSCE.

Ukraine is at the top of the OSCE's agenda today—and there the task is enormous. The situation remains very fragile, and the Crimea could become a hotspot. I was in the Republic of Georgia a week after the Russians rolled into the Abkhaz and South Ossetian regions under a situation in many ways similar—there are many who want to be aligned with Russia. And I'm very concerned that the U.S. and Europe need to work closely with the Russians in supporting the Ukrainians in implementing the six-point agreement, with the goal that the country matriculate into a more robust democracy.

Ukraine is a sovereign country—but at the same time Russia clearly means to play a role in the coming months, and to protect Ukraine's sovereignty and matriculate it into a more robust democracy we will have to engage meaningfully and respectfully with Russia as well.

Our government has not done this well in recent years—I hope the OSCE will do better. It seems that the OSCE is a place where all parties can meet to support the six-point agreement. The OSCE, as a consensus organization founded to ensure respect for borders through a concept of security that embraces human rights and the rule of law, must be able to play a role here.

Reconciliation should be at the top of its agenda—bringing parties together, facilitating them to set aside differences and work together—for the good of their country and to mitigate bloodshed.

I believe this is a test for the organization. So I welcome your appointment of a Personal Envoy on Ukraine and look forward to discussing the role you envision for the envoy and the organization, including observing the May election.

It will be important as well to vigorously implement the Addendum to the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings—which was adopted at the Kyiv Ministerial in December.

The addendum includes issues I raised in supplementary items that were passed by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. These include: calling on corporations to ensure that their supply chains do not include trafficked labor; focusing anti-trafficking efforts on vulnerable groups; increasing cooperation among law enforcement in different countries to prevent “sex tourism” involving the trafficking of minors; and calling for anti-trafficking training for the transportation and hospitality industries.

Anti-trafficking training in the transportation industry should be a priority in every country—including the U.S. Just this month I chaired a hearing at my Foreign Affairs Subcommittee to evaluate how the United States is doing on this training. In addition, as the Parliamentary Assembly's Special Representative on Human Trafficking, I am currently conducting a survey of OSCE countries' implementation of antitrafficking training, through parliamentarians active in the PA.

So I look forward to discussing your plans to promote implementation of the Addendum, and to working with you on this.

Another issue of consistent concern for this Commission is anti-Semitism in the OSCE region. This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Berlin High-Level Conference on Combating Anti-Semitism—a milestone for the organization in recognizing the seriousness of the problem in Europe, which was witnessing a resurgence of anti-Semitic incidents and attacks. I and other members of this Commission took part in that meeting as part of the U.S. delegation, and our Commission worked hard—including through the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly—to put the issue on the OSCE agenda.

As some of us who were there recall, that conference helped galvanize attention and led to some of the first government commitments, presented in the OSCE's Berlin Declaration that was issued at its close. It also resulted in the creation of ODIHR's department on tolerance and non-discrimination with its education programs and police training for combating hate crimes, among other initiatives.

Despite these important contributions the problem of anti-Semitism is still very much with us. This past November the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) released the findings of a survey it conducted among 6,000 Jews in eight EU countries. Three-quarters of those polled said anti-Semitism remained a serious problem. Nearly 25 percent said they avoided attending Jewish events or visiting Jewish sites

for fear of encountering it. In some countries such as Hungary, France and Belgium, well over forty percent said they had considered emigration because of it. Clearly there is still more to be done.

We think it would be quite appropriate to mark the tenth anniversary of the Berlin Conference with a high level event that could both look back at the achievements and contributions that OSCE has made in fighting anti-Semitism and intolerance and look ahead at the challenges that are still very much present. We understand that Germany would again be prepared to host such an event in Berlin. And you should know you will have the strong support of this Commission in undertaking it. But ultimately this must be spearheaded by the Chairmanship-in-Office, so we hope you will take the lead in making this a reality.

The last thing I'd like to mention is freedom of religion—this warrants renewed OSCE attention. Intolerance and discrimination against Christians is a phenomenon that is recognized by the OSCE and is on the increase in Europe—despite occasional roundtables and resolutions, the organization has not delivered much intensity on this issue. I hope you will be able to set us an example on this—perhaps by convening a new Expert Roundtable on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians in Vienna in 2014.

President Burkhalter, I look forward to working with you and your Swiss chairmanship team this year.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DIDIER BURKHALTER, PRESIDENT OF THE SWISS
CONFEDERATION, FOREIGN MINISTER AND CHAIRMAN OF THE OSCE

Thank you for the invitation to speak before your Commission. It is an honour and pleasure for me to address the issue of security—and of European security in particular—in front of members of the American Congress. Over the past 100 years, the United States has played a vital role in defending the values of liberty and security in Europe—and I wish to start by acknowledging this role. The dramatic developments in Ukraine in recent weeks have been a sobering reminder that security in Europe cannot be taken for granted. These developments have also revealed the need to foster dialogue, rebuild trust, reaffirm shared norms, and consolidate bridges across the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian region. It is my firm conviction that the OSCE has a major role to play in this regard.

The Swiss Chairmanship wishes to acknowledge the important role the Helsinki Commission plays within the OSCE. We also appreciate the close cooperation with the US Department of State on a wide range of OSCE issues. The United States is a crucial participant in the OSCE. It is the biggest contributor to its budget and in many ways indispensable to move the OSCE forward.

Switzerland has agreed to take the helm of the OSCE because the promotion of stability in Europe and beyond is a priority of our foreign policy. We also believe that we have something to offer as a neutral country with a tradition of good offices and mediation. A third reason is that the United States and a number of other partner countries asked us to take on this role. I therefore very much count on your valuable support. I have listened to your introductory remarks very carefully and hope that we can discuss the issues raised in some detail today. But before we engage in this discussion, let me make some general remarks about the OSCE and the priorities of the Swiss Chairmanship.

The fact that Switzerland is the first country to chair the OSCE for the second time (after 1996) indicates that we attach great importance to this organization. We value the OSCE as a forum for dialogue, a platform to generate and assist the implementation of common norms, and a field-based organization. We also acknowledge that the OSCE performs its many important tasks with a surprisingly low budget. Its annual budget is not much higher than the transfer fees paid for one top-class soccer player.

That said, the OSCE is currently not in a position to tap its full potential. The fact that its membership spans three continents is a key asset, but it is also a major challenge for decision-making. This is why as Chairperson-in-Office, I encourage all participating States to approach the OSCE in a spirit of cooperation and compromise.

If we want the OSCE to move forward, we need to be both principled and pragmatic. “Principled” in the sense that we should all stand up for our shared values and our OSCE commitments. “Pragmatic”, because no participating State will be able to see its objectives in the OSCE realized if it ignores the priorities and needs of others. In the mid-1970s, the OSCE was a success because participants made compromises and trade-offs across the three “baskets”. Today, I strongly believe that if all participating States engage with a balanced approach among the OSCE’s three dimensions, we will find much common ground.

The OSCE’s comprehensive approach to security is a key asset of the organization and corresponds to today’s security needs. Making full use of this holistic model will make it possible to increase the level of security not just of states but also of citizens. As you are well aware as Senators and Members of Congress, our citizens are no longer primarily concerned about traditional military threats. The OSCE’s security approach is very much consistent with their security perceptions.

This is all the more important because the future relevance of the OSCE will much depend on its ability to produce tangible results for the individuals and communities of its participating States. Good politics, after all, is at the service of the people. This is why the leitmotiv of the Swiss Chairmanship is to create a security community for the benefit of everyone.

Calling for pragmatism does not mean that we should shy away from criticism in the OSCE. Recalling the OSCE’s principles is more vital today than ever, especially when adherence to these principles is uncertain. I therefore encourage participating States to engage with each other in constructive ways to pave the way for shared solutions rather than alienation.

With its consensus-oriented political system and linguistic diversity, Switzerland is a kind of mini-OSCE. Based on our own experience, we seek to revitalize the OSCE’s culture of dialogue by calling on all participating States to take a step towards one another. We encourage all States to make gestures of good will to rebuild trust and allow for progress within the OSCE.

Ladies and gentlemen, Since assuming the Chairmanship of the OSCE at the beginning of 2014, my agenda has been dominated by the political crisis and recent escalation of violence in Ukraine. During the past weeks, I have repeatedly called on all sides to refrain from violence, resolve the crisis through dialogue and political means, and respect human rights. In a series of meetings, I have discussed options for OSCE assistance with the then-Ukrainian government as well as with members of the opposition.

The agreement reached on February 21 marked an important step towards ending the violence, and paved the way for a political solution of the crisis. I congratulate everyone involved who made this breakthrough possible, including the Polish, German and French Foreign Ministers and the Special Envoy of the Russian Federation.

With the appointment of an interim president by the Parliament, Ukraine has now entered a new phase of transition. Formidable challenges lie ahead. We should unite in our efforts to support Ukraine in these difficult times. A stable, democratic and united Ukraine is in the interest of us all.

Against this background, I proposed yesterday during my briefing at the UN Security Council to establish an International Contact Group on Ukraine. Ukraine should of course play a prominent role in the group and all international key actors should be included. We are currently consulting this idea with all actors concerned. The main task of the proposed Contact Group would be to support Ukraine in its transition period. The Contact Group would serve as a platform for coordination and sharing information on international assistance and project activities in Ukraine. The OSCE, through its impartiality and inclusivity, has the necessary attributes to host and moderate this group. Ukraine and all international actors involved in this crisis are in fact participating States of the OSCE.

I also announced yesterday my decision to appoint Ambassador Tim Guldemann as my Personal Envoy on Ukraine. He will coordinate all ongoing and planned activities of the OSCE in Ukraine on behalf of the Chairmanship. He will rapidly take up consultations with all sides and will cooperate closely with international partners.

A small OSCE core team has been sent to Ukraine to conduct a needs-assessment mission. There is an urgent need to rebuild trust among all parties involved. As I underlined yesterday at the UN, I encourage the new leaders of Ukraine to invite ODIHR to send a Human Rights Assessment Mission to the country to establish the facts and circumstances of the incidents that took place in Ukraine. The Human Rights Assessment Mission would recommend measures to deal with serious violations of human rights allegedly committed during this crisis. Its findings would be presented in a report and would help advance national reconciliation in Ukraine.

Presidential elections will be a crucial moment in the current transition period. We expect the Ukrainian authorities to issue an early invitation for an ODIHR election observation mission. In view of the rapidly changing developments, we are also ready to review and further specify the activities of the OSCE's Project Coordinator's Office in Kiev. We are currently witnessing a phase of de-escalation in Ukraine. It is essential to support a fair and inclusive process of transition which does not marginalize any part of Ukraine or any community. Ukraine deserves full international attention and support. I am convinced that the OSCE has the necessary tools to assist Ukraine in this difficult phase.

Ladies and gentlemen, Afghanistan—one of the OSCE's six Asian partners—is another hotspot where the OSCE can play a valuable role. While the international community develops its strategic vision for Afghanistan after 2014, the OSCE remains a good platform for practical, forward-looking regional co-operation and dialogue among all stakeholders. We continue to work closely with other international actors to ensure stability in Afghanistan and the wider region.

OSCE activities worth mentioning in this context are police training, borders and customs training, and counter narcotics. Our Central Asian field offices, the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, and the Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, are building local capacities and expert networks linking Afghanistan and the Central Asian states.

We are also working towards establishing an OSCE Research Centre on Afghan-Central Asian issues. In addition, ODIHR will send an election support team to Afghanistan to assist with preparations for the Afghan elections this year. With Switzerland chairing the Asian Partners for Cooperation next year, we are eager to discuss ideas of applying elements of the OSCE's cooperative security model to East Asia. Against the background of unresolved territorial disputes, rapidly rising defense budgets and growing risks of political polarization, East Asia could well benefit from the OSCE's experience in creating confidence and common norms through dialogue and transparency.

Following these general observations, I will now outline the priorities of the Swiss OSCE Chairmanship. We have set three overall objectives. We seek to contribute to fostering security and stability, improving people's lives, and strengthening the OSCE's capacity to act. In a nutshell, our mission is to enhance security, freedom, and responsibility. For each of our objectives, we have defined a number of priority areas. You have received a factsheet on these priorities. Let me just highlight a few points here. Fostering security and stability with regard to our first objective of fostering security and stability, the Western Balkans figure prominently on our agenda. My Special Representative for the Western Balkans, Ambassador Stoudmann, has been tasked with facilitating regional cooperation and reconciliation. I plan to visit this region in the coming months.

The OSCE should play a supporting role in the implementation of the Belgrade-Pristina agreement. Indeed, the OSCE has recently facilitated local elections in northern Kosovo and will continue to monitor this year's electoral processes in South Eastern Europe. I am also planning to travel to the South Caucasus. My Special Representative for this region, Ambassador Gnädinger, is co-chairing the Geneva International Discussions on the conflict in Georgia. These discussions are a unique, albeit fragile, platform to tackle the security and humanitarian aspects of the conflict. It is our hope that they will one day evolve into a forum that lays the ground for a settlement of the conflict. Nagorno-Karabakh is one of the most dangerous conflicts in Europe. One of my first meetings as Chairperson-in-Office was with the three co-chairs of the Minsk Group. I wish to emphasize at this point that both in Karabakh and in Georgia, United States involvement at the highest political level would be helpful for our efforts. I am convinced that the stalemate in these protracted conflicts can only be overcome with greater engagement and attention by international key players such as the United States. We very much appreciate the work of Ambassador Warlick, the US Co-Chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, and Deputy Assistant Secretary Eric Rubin, the US Representative in the Geneva Discussions.

Conventional arms control and confidence- and security-building measures play a key role in joint efforts to strengthen military stability, transparency and predictability in the OSCE area. Yet while the need for conventional arms control remains undisputed, the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe has reached an impasse. Conventional arms control in Europe can likely only be re-launched on the basis of a new conceptual approach. This will require many countries to modify long-held positions. We should also seek ways to ensure that unresolved territorial conflicts do not block progress on pan-regional arms control. All this will require initiative and leadership by the United States. The Swiss Chairmanship regards the OSCE as a useful marketplace for ideas on conventional arms control and is ready to facilitate conceptual discussions in this respect.

As for our second objective of improving people's lives, the implementation of all existing commitments in the Human Dimension is a key priority for us. We have defined and prepared our activities in this area on the basis of our two years' experience as Chair of the Human Dimension Committee. We aim to strengthen the implementation of commitments in full cooperation with the participating States, OSCE structures, and civil society. Switzerland will host a chairmanship event on human rights defenders in Bern, Switzerland, in June. On this occasion, the director of ODIHR, Ambassador Lenarcic, will present guidelines prepared by ODIHR on the protection of human rights defenders. (I should add that I visited ODIHR at the end of January, and that recruiting a successor for Mr Lenarcic will be another major task in 2014).

The Swiss Chairmanship will also put the issue of torture back on the agenda of the OSCE. We are planning an event on torture prevention in Vienna at the beginning of April. Cooperation between national mechanisms, NGOs, ombudspersons, international organizations, the UN and the OSCE will be at the centre of the discussions at this event. Another theme will be the fight against human trafficking. Hundreds of thousands of people, mainly women and children, are being forcefully trafficked in their own countries and across national borders. These victims are often sexually exploited or forced into slavery. This is a terrible crime. I wish to commend Co-Chair Smith for the three comprehensive bills you authored in the United States to combat trafficking and to help victims.

A week ago, the Swiss OSCE Chairmanship—together with the Austrian Chairmanship of the Council of Europe—organized a Conference against trafficking in human beings. The goal was to discuss how legally binding standards, monitoring mechanisms, and political strategies can mutually reinforce each other and lead to effective action to counter trafficking in human beings. As for the priority of a more reliable management of natural disasters, this is very much in the interest of the security and safety of our citizens. Disasters can hit anywhere at any time. The

United States knows from its own experience that the scale, frequency, and severity of disasters triggered by natural hazards will continue to grow at an accelerating pace.

Senator Cardin, Congressman Smith: you witnessed with your own eyes the destructive force of tropical cyclone Sandy in October 2012. You visited the impacted areas on Maryland's Eastern Shore and New Jersey, where over 30 of your compatriots lost their lives and where 350,000 housing units were damaged, causing economic losses of well over 30 billion dollars. Switzerland considers that disaster risk reduction should be firmly embedded in the Sustainable Development Goals. Our aim must be to move from disaster response to disaster prevention and climate change mitigation. We will address this issue at the meetings of the 22nd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum. In so doing, we seek to contribute to societies becoming resilient to climate change and disaster risk.

There is also a strong link between the human and the politico-military dimensions of the OSCE in combating transnational threats. For instance, this year we are tackling issues such as human rights in countering terrorism, kidnapping for ransom, and the return of foreign fighters. A major opportunity to discuss these issues will be the annual OSCE conference on counter-terrorism, which will take place in Interlaken, Switzerland. We are counting on the presence of American experts at the Interlaken Conference and on your continued support in tackling these issues. In the area of cyber threats, the Swiss Chairmanship will focus on the implementation of the initial set of OSCE confidence-building measures agreed last year. I would like to acknowledge the successful work of the US Chair of the Informal Working Group. The Swiss Chairmanship is grateful that the United States accepted to continue to chair this Working Group and will support its efforts to develop additional confidence-building measures. Strengthening the OSCE's Capacity to Act regarding our third objective of strengthening the OSCE's capacity to act, the "Helsinki+40" process is of particular importance. Adapting the OSCE to the security needs of the 21st century is both challenging and vital. This process is in itself an important confidence building measure as it helps address divergent security perspectives in a result-oriented manner. But it should be more than that. "Helsinki+40" is about defining the ways and means of the OSCE—and hence its future relevance. There are now a roadmap and eight coordinators in place to structure these discussions in Vienna. Again, participating States will need to show a degree of flexibility for this process to translate into meaningful results. I also believe that we need ministerial-level debates to get a solid idea of where the OSCE should be heading.

Numerous issues are being addressed in the context of "Helsinki+40". Let me mention here one issue where the Swiss Chairmanship would particularly appreciate US support. I am referring to the need to improve the effectiveness of OSCE field operations.

These field operations have proven valuable in assisting host countries in implementing their commitments. But it is vital that we continuously evaluate such activities, with a view to maximizing their effectiveness and local acceptance. We are currently conceptualizing new types of field presences with a better balance of OSCE activities. US support for these discussions will help carry them forward.

As for other means of rendering the OSCE more effective, I would argue that the model of consecutive chairmanships, as carried out by Switzerland and Serbia, has already proven its merit. Bern and Belgrade have developed joint work and implementation plans. We have also agreed that our Special Representatives will be re-appointed by the end of this year. Consecutive chairmanships can provide the OSCE with more continuity and are a model worth considering for the future.

Linked to the "Helsinki+40" debates is the Swiss priority of strengthening the OSCE's role in mediation. The peaceful settlement of disputes that was included in the Helsinki Final Act remains one of the core tasks of the OSCE today. This is why we are contributing to the mediation-support capacity that is currently being built in the OSCE Secretariat. The aim is to capture knowledge about mediation processes and make sure that OSCE mediators are supported with training and thematic expertise. In this regard, I wish to acknowledge the important assistance provided by the United States Institute of Peace and the Conflict Management Program at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.

Ladies and Gentlemen, The Swiss Chairmanship attaches great importance to our final priority of enhancing involvement of civil society and in particular of young people. We firmly believe that offering a platform for a dialogue with civil society contributes to assisting OSCE institutions and participating States in implementing commitments. It also provides an opportunity for our governments to listen and respond to the needs of our citizens.

Four regional workshops are being organized in four different regions of the OSCE in the coming months. The first workshop has recently taken place in Belgrade. The two topics identified by civil society as the most pressing issues were torture prevention and hate crime and hate speech, the latter with a particular focus on Roma and Sinti. It was an inspiring start to our workshop series—the next destinations being Austria, Tajikistan, and Georgia. The recommendations resulting from this process should feed into the final civil society conference that will be held in parallel to the Ministerial Council in Basel in December 2014.

Finally, there is our “Youth for Security and Cooperation in Europe” project, which brings together 57 young people from all OSCE participating States. This project is particularly dear to me, as our shared responsibility as politicians is to shape a more prosperous, equitable and sustainable future for the generations to come. In the course of this year, our Youth Ambassadors will simulate a whole OSCE negotiation cycle. Last month they simulated a Permanent Council meeting in Vienna. I also invited three of these Youth Ambassadors to address the “real” Permanent Council that met in the Hofburg Palace in Vienna. In July, a Ministerial Council Meeting will be simulated in Belgrade.

The purpose of these meetings is to negotiate a Youth Action Plan with recommendations for the OSCE and its participating States. The Youth Ambassadors will present their Action Plan at the Ministerial Council in Basel, which I hope will serve as an inspiration for the OSCE to work out its own Youth Action Plan.

Chairman Cardin, Co-Chairman Smith, Ladies and Gentlemen, Let me conclude my statement by thanking the United States for its continued commitment to the OSCE. As an institution complementary to NATO, the OSCE constitutes America’s second foothold in Europe. It is a bridge between the Euro-Atlantic and the Eurasian region. The stronger this bridge, the stronger our common security. Thank you for your attention and support. I look forward to your questions and comments.



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