

THE UNITED STATES AND THE OSCE: A PARTNERSHIP FOR ADVANCING FREEDOM

HEARING BEFORE THE COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

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COMMISSIONERS

	Page
Hon. Sam Brownback, Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe	1
Hon. Benjamin L. Cardin, Ranking Member, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe	3

WITNESS

Hon. Daniel Fried, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs	4
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ADDITIONAL WITNESS

Ludmilla Alexeeva, Chairperson, Moscow Helsinki Group	14
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APPENDICES

Prepared statement of Hon. Christopher H. Smith, Co-Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe	16
Prepared statement of Hon. Daniel Fried	18
Response to written questions submitted to Hon. Daniel Fried by:	
Hon. Sam Brownback, Chairman	35
Hon. Christopher H. Smith, Co-Chairman	42
Hon. Benjamin L. Cardin, Ranking Member	48

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October 25, 2005

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE
WASHINGTON, DC

The hearing was held at 3 p.m. in room 124, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC, Hon. Sam Brownback, Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, presiding.

Commissioners present: Hon. Sam Brownback, Chairman, and Hon. Benjamin L. Cardin, Ranking Member.

Witness present: Hon. Daniel Fried, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs.

STATEMENT OF HON. SAM BROWNBACK, CHAIRMAN, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Mr. BROWNBACK. Good afternoon. I'm delighted everybody's here. And my apologies for being late. I had another meeting that I was chairing, and we just wrapped up.

Today's hearing of the Helsinki Commission is on U.S. policy toward the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, or the OSCE.

We have a scheduled a ministerial meeting in December, where reforms in the Organization under consideration, numerous human rights concerns in parts of Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia, all will be central issues. The view of the State Department on these and other matters are of keen interest to the Commission and to others who monitor the OSCE region.

I hope to look at some of these specific issues before us today, but I hope we can also take a broader look at where the OSCE fits into U.S. policy. How vital is the Organization to the promotion of U.S. interests in Europe and around the world? Has it adapted to the challenges we face in the 21st century?

Are we making sufficient use of its assets and capabilities, as we once did to advance human rights and freedom? What more can be done, and how can the Helsinki Commission and the State Department work together toward that end? This is my first year as chairman of the Helsinki Commission. I've tried to emphasize two aspects of the OSCE as particularly important in hearings and other activities during 2005.

First, while there is plenty of work to do on building democracy within OSCE states, OSCE also needs to look at the world around it. Terrorism is a global threat. And the OSCE can shape a common regional response. The same can be said about weapons of

mass destruction and the means for their delivery. Certainly human rights abuses are a problem in the OSCE and around the world.

The OSCE can respond to these external threats by ensuring participating States adhere to OSCE commitments to combat terrorism, to safeguard everything from small-arms stockpiles to nuclear materials, from rogue regimes and groups. The OSCE can also serve as a model and resource to address instability and human rights violations in other regions, like the Middle East and East Asia.

The need for the OSCE to do these things is why the Commission has held hearings this year on the Russian-Syrian connection, as well as on the trans-Atlantic response to Iran. That's why I addressed the conference on the OSCE security dimension in Seoul, Korea, earlier this year.

Co-Chairman Smith and I both have a deep interest in the future of Africa and the universal nature of the human desire to be free. It means the lessons learned in Europe might resonate in Africa, as well.

The second aspect of the OSCE which I've stressed is to keep a focus on real people. While one must attend to the diplomatic developments in Vienna, we cannot lose sight of the fact that the OSCE is really about the individuals out there struggling to exercise their right to freedom to worship, wanting to voice the concerns of youth, trying to return to a home they fled during conflict, hoping simply to be free.

That's why this Commission has held hearings this year on the Schneerson Collection and on the unregistered religious groups in Russia. It's why we are so concerned about the displaced Roma who continue to reside in lead-contaminated camps in Kosovo.

It's why we hear testimony from an American who was a domestic trafficking victim. There was a 2-hour program last night—and it will be repeated tonight—on human trafficking. I was not able to see it last time, but from the reports I've heard it is quite good.

The Helsinki Final Act has always stood as a beacon for the silenced, the trafficked, the tortured, and the displaced. Its brightness fades, however, when the OSCE fails to turn its words into deeds or when the OSCE states fail to understand the dialogue is not just between one government and another, but between each government and the people it is supposed to serve.

Before introducing today's witness, I'd like to recognize an individual of particular note, Ludmilla Alexeeva. She's a founding member of the Moscow Helsinki Group, which was formed in 1976. That was a bold time to step forward to be a part of a Helsinki group.

I first traveled to Russia—and the only time I've been there—was in 1977. It was not a free place at that time.

She has remained a respected part of that group. That institution is a key one in the human rights movement in Russia today.

The creation of this Helsinki Commission was clearly related to the formation of the Moscow Helsinki Group, a story that Ludmilla tells in her book, "The Thaw Generation." Our own best efforts here can never match the courage and determination that she, Yuri

Orlov, Natan Sharansky, and others displayed in the Soviet human rights movement in the 1970s and 1980s.

We lost Rosa Parks yesterday, one of the key people that stood for civil rights in this country. And I don't know if the comparison is fair or not, but you are certainly a person that didn't give your seat up on the bus in Moscow at a very tough time. And I want to thank you and recognize you for doing that.

Would you please stand and let us recognize you, please? [Applause.]

What you did in 1976 took courage.

Congressman Cardin, do you have an opening statement?

**STATEMENT OF BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, RANKING MEMBER,
COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE**

Mr. CARDIN. Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm just going to underscore the points that you have made, that the Helsinki process is truly a unique institution.

It's unique in the sense that it's been, I think, the most effective international body in dealing with human rights and the human dimension. Obviously, very important beyond just the human dimension, but I think it is proven to be the most effective in bringing out change in countries on human rights issues.

And it's unique in the sense that it requires engagement by the countries. It's not a matter of simply enforcing treaty rights. It requires engagement and gives us the right to legitimately challenge the actions of all of the participating States.

It's also unique in that, here in the United States, it brings together the executive and legislative branches, almost as one entity, as one voice. And that's why I think this hearing is particularly useful and important. It carries out a tradition—it continues a tradition of this Commission to hold a hearing, inviting the Assistant Secretary to be here. And I very much thank you, Mr. Chairman, for providing this hearing, an opportunity for us to see how we can even improve the effectiveness of the Helsinki process and of our Commission in carrying out this very important work. So thank you.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Thank you, Congressman.

I want to introduce and welcome our witness today, the Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, Daniel Fried.

For more than 25 years, Assistant Secretary Fried either has been representing U.S. interests at diplomatic posts in Russia, Central Europe, and the Balkans, or has been responsible for shaping U.S. policy in these countries and regions back here in Washington. In May of this year, he became the Assistant Secretary, with chief responsibilities for shaping U.S. policy toward the OSCE, as well as relations with OSCE states.

Assistant Secretary Fried, I want to thank you for your service on behalf of the United States. I look forward to hearing your comments.

And I want to build on something that I've heard Secretary Rice say. This is a key time for OSCE. If you look at the movement and the changes that are taking place or are possibly taking place, the OSCE can really be—should be—one of the lead entities in helping

to shape that region, that was once the Soviet Union and its sphere of influence.

And I think it's done a remarkable job for the totality of its life, but particularly in recent years, in shaping what's taken place. And I look forward to the Helsinki Commission working very closely with the State Department on what each of us can do to move forward human rights and freedom in this region of the world.

Secretary Fried, delighted to have you here. And thanks for your years of service.

**STATEMENT OF HON. DANIEL FRIED, ASSISTANT SECRETARY
OF STATE FOR EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS**

Sec. FRIED. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Congressmen.

I am pleased to be here in this year marking the 30th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act to discuss the OSCE and its role in advancing not only the interests but the values of our Nation. I'm grateful for the leadership and support you and other members of the Commission have given to the Helsinki principles and OSCE over the years.

And I, too, feel honored to be here in the presence of Ludmilla Alexeeva. I personally, and I think many in this room, have been inspired by her work and the work of the Moscow Helsinki Group over the decades, which have brought us to a new and better place in Europe and the world.

In his second Inaugural Address, President Bush declared a policy of promoting democracy and freedom throughout the world. The OSCE, Mr. Chairman, is the premiere institution for advancing freedom in the Euro-Atlantic region.

On human rights and support for democracy, the so-called human dimension, its expertise and accomplishments are unparalleled. Its election observation methodology represents the gold standard in this field. And the OSCE's efforts have been instrumental in advancing democracy.

The Organization has undertaken groundbreaking work in the promotion of tolerance and in combating anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance. The OSCE is a valuable partner in our efforts to promote basic freedoms and human rights, including religious freedom and freedom of the media.

Its field missions are vital to the OSCE's work in many areas, and we strongly support their works in promoting security through good human rights, strong civil societies, and democratic practices.

The OSCE also performs important work in the security and economic spheres; it is a key instrument in helping solve regional conflicts, in countering terrorism, and combating trafficking in persons.

The significant role of the OSCE in promoting democracy and freedom was well illustrated during the last year in the impartial election observation missions it conducted, most notably in Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan.

Citizens of these countries demanded their leaders' adherence to OSCE commitments and to principles of freedom and democracy. They said "enough" to fraudulent elections. OSCE helped them voice their opinions and give them a legitimate vote.

Moreover, initial fraudulent elections in Ukraine bore witness to the importance of thorough and objective election observation, observation which provided both the international community and domestic citizens with a credible assessment on which to base demands for a legitimate outcome. The OSCE is continuing to work with the governments and civil society in Georgia, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan and other countries to help them create and maintain democratic and open societies based on the rule of law, which will make them stable and secure neighbors.

Another success this year was the OSCE Cordoba Conference. This well-attended event successfully drew high-level attention, not only to the problems of anti-Semitism and intolerance, but also to best practices for combating them. We believe that the OSCE should followup on the 2004 Sofia Tolerance decision and the 2005 Cordoba conference, through regional seminars or expert-level meetings on implementation in 2006.

These will generate even more enthusiasm among governmental and non-governmental experts for implementing OSCE commitments and focus attention on specific ODIHR projects and national best practices. We support having high-level conferences along the lines of Cordoba and its predecessors every other year, to ensure high-level political attention to fulfillment of commitments. Also successful was our effort last year, together with NGO partners, to have the OSCE establish three personal representatives on tolerance. Throughout 2005, these representatives have traveled widely to raise awareness of OSCE commitments and to support projects to assist OSCE states implementation of these commitments.

We strongly support the work of the personal representatives and support their reappointment in January 2006.

Similarly, we have provided significant political and financial support to the activities of the OSCE's Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, ODIHR, in these areas of preventing hate crimes and discrimination. We recently seconded an expert to the post of legal adviser on hate crimes for ODIHR's Tolerance Program.

As with Cordoba, U.S. goals for this year's Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, held in Warsaw last month, were successfully met. They included reinforcing our commitments to human rights and democracy and showing support for NGO's working in these fields; generating political will among states for implementing OSCE commitments; responding accurately to criticisms of the U.S. about media freedom and human rights and the war on terrorism; and building support for U.S. positions on tolerance conferences, the three personal representatives on tolerance, OSCE reform, and other issues.

In addition to delegations from participating States, a record number of over 300 NGO's also participated in this year's Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, showcasing the OSCE's special ability to promote civil society through active cooperation.

I'm grateful for the participation of the Helsinki Commission staff, with some of whom I'd had the pleasure of working for more years, I'm sure, than they or I would like to recall, as part of U.S. delegations.

Notwithstanding the OSCE's successes, the OSCE should continue to adapt, but not at the expense of its effectiveness. One of the key tasks facing the OSCE this fall is the question of reform. This process got under way with the recommendations made by the Eminent Persons Panel earlier this year.

We are closely examining these proposals that might—and are looking especially at those that might enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization, but without undercutting its work in the human dimension. We are working with the Slovenian Chair, the European Union, and all other participating States to find ways to do just that.

The OSCE's work, through ODIHR and election monitoring, is rightly recognized as superb. Unfortunately, there have been calls by some states to review and even question election-related commitments and methodology.

We're amenable to review in areas where ODIHR's effectiveness could be enhanced; however, we are strongly against any proposals that would undermine election commitments or impinge on ODIHR's autonomy or effectiveness. We see no need to change something that works so well.

The issue here is not methodology but rather marshalling the political will among participating States to ensure implementation of existing commitments, thus allowing the voice of the electorate to be heard.

One of the OSCE's most important assets is its institutions and the 17 field presences, from the Balkans to Central Asia. We strongly support OSCE field work and believe that field offices are critical to promoting OSCE commitments, especially democratic values and international human rights standards.

In their work with host governments, NGO's, and the public, field missions perform vital work in numerous fields, from institution-building, promotion of democracy and development of civil society, to coordinating international efforts at conflict prevention, post-conflict rehabilitation, and conflict resolution.

At the Ljubljana Ministerial in December, we will highlight the accomplishments of the OSCE in this anniversary year, while building support for the important work which still lies ahead.

While there has been some progress in negotiations between Georgia and Russia, we will again strongly urge Russia to fulfill its Istanbul commitments. We expect the ministerial to endorse OSCE work on promoting tolerance, gender equality, shipping container security, small arms and light weapons, MANPADS, and the destruction of excess stockpiles of ammunition and weapons.

The issue of how the OSCE funds itself is still unresolved, but we hope by the ministerial to have agreement on new OSCE scales of assessment. Russia is seeking a dramatic reduction in its contributions to the OSCE and remains the lone holdout among OSCE's 55 participating States on new scales.

The United States stands behind the criteria for adjustment of the scales adopted in 2001 and 2002.

Mr. Chairman, let me turn to Central Asia, which is a region where the OSCE has become more active in recent years and where it can have an important role in promoting democracy, civil society, and respect for human rights, as well as on security and economic

issues. We do have serious concerns about developments in some countries in the region.

The killings in Andijan last May in Uzbekistan and the Uzbek's government reaction to demands for an impartial investigation are a particular example.

We're also paying attention to Kazakhstan, its upcoming elections. And the degree to which these are judged to be free and fair will be a critical element for the international community in observing and assessing Kazakhstan's development. This election of course forms but a part of the overall equation, and Kazakhstan has been making important steps forward in many areas. In the Caucasus, the United States is working as a co-chair of the OSCE's Minsk Group, as well as independently, to facilitate a peaceful negotiated settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

Negotiations are moving in the right direction. In the past year, the Minsk Group co-chairs have facilitated numerous meetings of the Armenian and Azerbaijani Foreign Ministers and two meetings of the Presidents, most recently on the margins of the CIS Summit in Kazan.

I'm encouraged by my visit last week to the South Caucasus. We believe that there is a realistic chance for progress, even in the coming months. Much depends on the political will of each side. And we do not expect further visible progress until after the November 6th Azerbaijani parliamentary elections.

Counterterrorism, Mr. Chairman, is an area where there is good cooperation among the 55 participating States and a united sense of purpose. The OSCE can, as you said, have a multiplier effect by the 55 to adopt decisions and standards on security and terrorism that many states might have otherwise ignored.

The State Department has worked closely with the OSCE's Anti-Terrorism Unit to provide expertise for a range of workshops aimed at helping other participating States improve their effectiveness in areas such as the use of the Internet to recruit terrorists.

In November, the State Department will co-sponsor a conference to be held in Vienna, which will bring together high-level officials from capitals to discuss new ways of combating terrorist financing.

Over the past year, the OSCE has continued to expand and strengthen its efforts on combating the modern-day slavery called trafficking in persons. In addition to establishment of the special representative on combating TIP, the Anti-Trafficking Assistance Unit got up and running, headed by a very effective U.S. expert, Michele Clark. We want to see this unit and the special representative focus OSCE activities on strategic priorities in the area where OSCE can make a difference.

The OSCE has also taken the lead in the international community in establishing a code of conduct for its mission members to ensure that they do not contribute to trafficking in persons. And this fall, the United States will again introduce a draft ministerial decision to strengthen this work and have OSCE States agree to take responsibility for their own peacekeeping troops and mission members.

This year, we have updated it to include the issue of preventing sexual exploitation by peacekeepers and international mission members. I would like to note the Parliamentary Assembly's dec-

laration in Washington in support of this ministerial decision and thank Congressman Smith—express my thanks to Congressman Smith for his leadership on this initiative.

Mr. Chairman, the OSCE has value and has demonstrated its value in achieving U.S. foreign policy objectives and in the promotion of our common values. In promoting democratic development and respect for human rights, the OSCE is a lead organization in the Euro-Atlantic area. On economic development, the OSCE promotes good governance and helps countries put systems in place to fight corruption.

On political-military issues, such as the fight against terrorism, border security, small arms and light weapons, and excess stockpiles, the OSCE fills crucial gaps. It has proven itself an effective tool. It complements our bilateral, diplomatic, and assistance efforts throughout Europe and Eurasia.

OSCE's successes would not be possible without support from the Congress and the congressional staff.

Let me again express my thanks, sir, for your work through the Helsinki Commission and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

And I would like to express also my appreciation for Congressman Hastings' activism as President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

Mr. Chairman, I would like, with your permission, to submit a more comprehensive version of my remarks for the record. And with that, I look forward to answering any questions you might have and to a good and stimulating discussion.

Thank you, sir, for your attention.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Let me back you up. You've been in this region for 25 years. Take me through some of the places you've worked over the years, if you could. Just rattle them off.

Sec. FRIED. Leningrad, in darker days. Belgrade, before the war, before the breakup of Yugoslavia. Poland, at the very beginning of freedom. Again in Poland as Ambassador in the late 1990s. And, in between, in Washington at the Soviet desk, the Polish desk, the National Security Council in the 1990s, and the NSC in the current administration.

Mr. BROWNBACK. As you describe that, I just think it's been nothing short of an absolute profound period of time that you've witnessed and been a direct part of it. And as I mention in my written statement, I'm impressed, thankful, and you must be thankful to have lived during interesting times, although I'm sure it's given you some sleepless nights at many of those junctures along the way.

I want to take you to where we are right now on a couple of the election cycles, particularly in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. I know Secretary Rice just traveled recently to the Central Asian region, delivering a very strong, balanced message, which I think is important for us to do.

What are the prospects for fair and free elections in those two countries?

Sec. FRIED. There are prospects for free and fair elections. There have been some problems, which we have noted. But the Secretary in Astana and in my trip last week to Baku, we called for free and

fair elections. We also have worked with both governments to provide specific suggestions and offers of support.

We want to see, in these countries and throughout the region, steady progress toward freer and freer elections, toward greater and greater respect for basic human rights, greater and greater space for civil society.

Mr. Chairman, I think we have to be bold and visionary about what it is we seek and clear about our vision of democracy. I think we also have to work with governments as they seek to do the right thing.

It is foolish to make predictions about events that haven't happened yet. I hope that these elections will give us the basis to continue our cooperation with these governments and cooperation with civil society in both of these countries to advance our objectives.

But in the meantime, we are doing everything we can with the government, with civil society, and through our programs of election support, and with the OSCE, to make sure that these elections are as good as can be achieved.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Have the precursor steps been taken to see that these are free and fair elections? By that, I mean, in Azerbaijan, have the steps leading up to the elections thus far led one to believe that, by and large, these are going to be free and fair?

Obviously, things can change dramatically, but there's also a setting-up process. Are candidates being allowed to campaign? Or are they arrested in jail somewhere? Do people have access to the media? Are those precursor steps to a free and fair election taking place in those two countries?

Sec. FRIED. The situation in both countries is mixed. There are active opposition candidates. There is an opposition press. In Baku, the opposition candidates have had access to television.

I met with them. I met with the two leading opposition candidates in the Presidential elections in Kazakhstan, which I visited 2 weeks prior to Secretary Rice's visit. I met with opposition figures, including parliamentary candidates, in Baku.

The picture is mixed. And I said so publicly in my remarks—in public remarks in Baku. There is some good, some areas for improvement. We are working with and speaking to the Azerbaijani Government about some specific suggestions.

The most recent news—and we trying to get details—but news coming today suggests that the Government of Azerbaijan has taken significant steps to resolve one of the concerns the international community had, which was the finger-inking of voters to prevent vote fraud, multiple voting. It seems that the Government of Azerbaijan wants to pursue this and wants to pull this together before the elections. We're seeking details.

So the picture, Senator, is a mixed one, but we hope to see elections which are as good as possible, contested elections, and we hope to see these elections followed by more progress. And we will be very clear, working with the OSCE, in making both recommendations and assessments.

Mr. BROWNBACK. What specifics can you identify in each of these countries that need to be addressed, prior to the election, for these elections to be free and fair?

Sec. FRIED. Well, the issue of media access—although, as I said, there has been television access for opposition candidates in both countries. There are occasionally charges that these state media tends to be slanted in favor of the incumbents. There are charges that the print media does not have the circulation that it should have.

There have been issues in Azerbaijan about demonstrations. The atmosphere in Baku tends to be rather polarized, as is often the case in pre-electoral situations. We have urged that the government permit demonstrations. We have also urged that the opposition commit itself to peaceful demonstrations and commit itself to behaving as an opposition the way you would want the opposition to behave were it in government.

So there is a great deal of work to be done. And we are in contact with both the governments and oppositions, and working with the OSCE to convey the recommendations of ODIHR missions, to convey our own suggestions, and work with governments when they express a willingness to work with us.

Mr. BROWNBACK. What is the current state of relationship between the United States and Uzbekistan?

Sec. FRIED. Difficult, in a word. I was in Uzbekistan about 3½ weeks ago. We were deeply troubled—

Mr. BROWNBACK. Were you able to meet with President Karimov?

Sec. FRIED. I was, sir. My message to the Uzbekistan Government is that we cannot have a one-dimensional relationship with Uzbekistan purely based on security. I recalled for my Uzbek interlocutors the joint statement that the Uzbek and the American Government agreed to and issued in 2002, when President Karimov visited Washington.

That statement outlined a broad set of objectives in our relations, starting with cooperation to support democracy and civil society. I said that my government adheres to that model of relations, a broad model, in which we pursue our interests in reform, our interest in counterterrorism and security, and our economic interests with Uzbekistan and support its reforms.

I regret that those reforms have not moved as quickly as we would like. The Andijan killings, which it is fair to say did start with an attack on government institutions in the prison, turned into a killing of civilians, several hundred. The exact number is not known.

And we regret that the Government of Uzbekistan has not to this day seen fit to allow a credible outside investigation, which would help clarify those events. So I have to say that our relations are difficult. I suppose they would not be difficult if we were willing to simply give up our democracy and give up our human rights agenda, but we are not. We will continue to speak out about the totality of our interests in that country. And I hope that relations improve.

Mr. BROWNBACK. What was President Karimov's comments to you about the Uzbek-U.S. relationship?

Sec. FRIED. Well, Senator, I probably shouldn't characterize a leader's comments to me during a private conversation. But I will say that, while we hope to put our relations back on track, on the basis of the joint statement of 2002, which, as I said, included de-

mocracy and support for democratic reform, I fear we are in for a difficult period.

In the course of the trial of persons arrested in Uzbekistan in connection with the Andijan, the prosecution has made accusations that the United States was somehow involved, involved, I should say, in the initial attacks on the prison.

I said in Uzbekistan and elsewhere, when I was asked about this, that I would find it exceedingly odd that an American Government would be accused of complicity with people who are regarded—who the Uzbek Government regards as Islamist extremists.

They believe that Islamist extremists were responsible for the attack. I pointed out that it's rather absurd to accuse the United States of complicity with such people. Our government has been criticized for various things, but not, to my knowledge, for complicity with Islamist extremists. That seemed to be an utterly fanciful and ridiculous charge. It's one I regret that has been made.

Mr. BROWNBACK. What about with Russia and Russia's commitment to human rights and democratic principles? You've been a long-term observer of Russia and knowledgeable of developments there. Are they headed in the right direction now? Is the trend line headed in the right direction or not?

Sec. FRIED. The answer to that partially depends on where your baseline is. If we start with 1976, obviously the founding of the Moscow Helsinki Group, the trend line has been very good. This is not the Soviet Union. I don't have the experience of the Soviet Union as did Soviet citizens, but I spent some time there.

In recent years, we have been concerned and have expressed concern about certain trends in Russia, particularly the centralization of power. And we have said that it seems to us that one of the hallmarks of democracy is the existence of strong and independent institutions, both institutions of government and institutions independent of government.

That is a hallmark of—not simply of American democracy, but of democracies generally. How the Russians choose to do this is a matter for them, but democracies do have things in common.

We have expressed our concerns. We have done so privately. We have done so publicly. Secretary Rice and the President have been quite clear about this.

It's important to keep in mind that this is not—despite some of our concerns—this is not the Soviet Union we're dealing with. But we have to be clear about what it is we seek. We have to be clear about where we stand. And we have to be consistent. And I think we've been so.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Establishing a baseline, which I think is a fair point—let us establish a baseline in the year 2000 on Russia. Is the trend line going in the right direction on democracy and human rights, from a 2000 baseline?

Sec. FRIED. There are issues of concern from 2000 that we have raised. And I think it is important that we continue to speak out about our concerns and, at the same time, recognize the progress that Russia has made.

It requires both clarity about where we see problems and perspectives about where we see progress. In the long run, I am opti-

mistic about Russia, because I believe that the desire for freedom is universal and I believe that modern, well-functioning democracies actually provide better lives for their citizens, and that the Russian people, like all people, will insist on accountable government and have been insisting on accountable government at times in the past.

So we look forward to working with you to express both our concerns but also our perspectives.

Mr. BROWNBACK. You stated it very diplomatically, so there's not a quotable line there. That's a nice job.

Sec. FRIED. Well, I am supposed to be a diplomat.

Mr. BROWNBACK. And well-practiced in it. I would note that there's been concerns by a lot of people, expressed over some period of time, that Russia, simply within the last couple of years, has really not lived up to its commitment nor its stature in the world, nor what it should be doing for its own people in moving forward.

And I think the trend line has been moving pretty clearly in the wrong direction in recent years. And I know the administration is concerned about that and I hope can continue to push it.

I want to ask you about China. Increasingly, we've seen recently that voracious appetite for natural resources, raw resources, by China, and seemingly driving a fair amount of foreign policy decisions by China just simply based upon the desire, the greater consumption need for natural resources.

Do you see this great Chinese drive for additional raw resources having an impact in the region of South Caucasus, Central Asia, Russia?

Sec. FRIED. I see it differently in different places. In the South Caucasus, China is not or has not yet been as large a factor as it may be in Central Asia. And we have to look still differently on the Chinese presence in Eastern Siberia.

I think that China is interested in Russian energy resources. It is interested in Central Asia. China has been increasingly its presence and profile worldwide. I'm not an expert on China. It's beyond my field of expertise.

I'll just say it's certainly in our interest that China's emergence take place in a way that is consistent with international norms, the rule of law, and in a way that is compatible with our own interests and the interests of our friends.

When I was in Central Asia, it was clear to me that the leaders who think most strategically about the future of their region see a challenge in the establishment of sovereignty, considering their neighborhood.

As they put it, we have some very big neighbors to the north, to the east. There are some problems to the south, and we are far away from you and far away from Europe.

They are looking for ways to strengthen their sovereignty. My advice to my Central Asian friends was that economic reform and political reform actually do strengthen your sovereignty, because a strong, well-run, successful state has no need of outside patrons because it generates support from within.

And the greater the sovereignty of a given country, the greater its ability to handle challenges from larger neighbors.

Mr. BROWNBAC. I think that's wise advice. I just would add that my experience and observation of China, and particularly in Africa, is that it will do whatever it needs to do and work with whomever in needs to work in order to access natural resources.

And China can work with some pretty bad actors in a lot of places without much concern at all for human rights, democracy, individual freedoms, trafficking, militant Islam. It's kind of agnostic, apolitical on all of the above, but will desire to try to get as much as it can, in the way of a natural resource bases. This is something for us to push back against aggressively, if it's being done in a way harmful to the world as a whole.

I have no problem competing for natural resources, but I do if it's done on the basis of supporting a terrorist regime or—Uzbekistan has less in the way of oil resources, but it has other natural resources if China moves in there simply because Uzbekistan has been a bad actor and now here's an opportunity.

I think that's something we should pushing back aggressively in the region, against the Chinese, which is a different portfolio than yours.

Sec. FRIED. I do agree that an American presence in the region, whether it is economic, or military, or political, in support of reforms, can be very useful for these countries as they are finding their way. We want good partners in the region with whom we can work on a common agenda.

Mr. BROWNBAC. I hope you'll keep working with us. OSCE is an instrument of U.S. foreign policy. But I think, as a bilateral setting, this one's well-established, well-positioned, and something that we can work very closely on regarding Russia, Central Asia and elections that are moving forward.

And I really do hope we can do that, and also push back against Russia on some of the OSCE reforms that it's pushing that would gut OSCE overall. And I certainly think we need to use the other aspects of OSCE work, security, and economic cooperation as much as we can as well.

But regarding the rhetorical attacks that Russia's putting on the OSCE—and obviously, the OSCE is pushing back against—I'm hopeful the administration will be as aggressive and bold as possible in that, too.

Sec. FRIED. We will resist efforts from any quarter to weaken OSCE's ability to carry out its mandate and especially its mandate to observe elections.

ODIHR is a flexible instrument. It has a great deal of autonomy. It has proven itself to be both expert and flexible. And we do not want to see any reforms which would weaken ODIHR's ability to do what it has been doing well.

We don't think it's broken. We don't see a need to fix it.

Mr. BROWNBAC. You're right. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe is a long-standing entity, and one of the peaks in its effectiveness is right now. One of the last things we need is to have it gutted, to have some of the juice taken away from it.

These are the reforms that are needed in that region, and this is the entity to work through. And I'm glad to hear that strong statement from the Administration on it.

Secretary, thank you very much for joining us. I wonder if you would mind giving me the pleasure of inviting to the table Ludmilla Alexeeva, who helped start the Moscow Helsinki Group, just to make some comments. I'd hate to have somebody here in the room that's been such a clear standard-bearer without inviting her to make a few comments.

Would you care to come forward and join us, Ludmilla? I know you have no prepared context or any text.

LUDMILLA ALEXEEVA, CHAIRPERSON, MOSCOW HELSINKI GROUP

Ms. ALEXEEVA. I would like to say that the Soviet Union and its allies were totalitarian states, but the Helsinki process focused greater attention on forcing totalitarian regimes to fulfill their obligations in humanitarian provisions of the Helsinki Accords.

The Moscow Helsinki Group, which has been mentioned today, was founded just to use the mechanism of the Helsinki Final Act for that aim, to force a totalitarian state to respect human rights and freedoms, to fulfill humanitarian provisions of the Helsinki Accords.

And it has been very successful in that, very much thanks to support of the Helsinki Commission and its first chairman, Congressman Dante Fascell.

I think, in today's situation, the Helsinki process may be used very effectively, too, with the same aim, to force respect human rights and freedoms in states participating in the OSCE which have totalitarian or at least authoritarian regimes. I mean such countries as Belarus, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and, unfortunately, my country, the Russian Federation.

As far as Russia, it would be very important to restore the OSCE Mission in Chechnya, because, in Chechnya, any legislation is absent of human rights which are violated everyday by very terrible men.

What is also very important—not only for Russian citizens' sake, but for whole world—is to have OSCE observe my country's elections in 2007 and 2008, parliamentary elections and federal and presidential elections. And I would believe you know why I say this and why I suggest it.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Well, I just want to recognize and thank you for being so bold and courageous. It's one thing to do it now, but you were there in 1976, and have been a very clear, bold leader.

I know Natan Sharansky fairly well, having worked with him a number of times. And I'm always impressed to see him, and to see how he stood so long and so firm. Frequently, in these systems, you never get to a majority but just a few bold people that are willing to stand and speak the truth, and the place falls over time. It doesn't happen immediately.

Ms. ALEXEEVA. Well, it was like miracle, but I do believe that it's possible to repeat it today, because it's much easier to make changes today in Russia than it was to force the Soviet Union to respect humanitarian provisions of the Final Act.

Of course, the United States took the time to cooperate with and coordinate the efforts of all democratic countries that were signatories of Final Act. In today's situation, it will be difficult, too, but

I remember the first stage of this process. And not one European country in the beginning supported the United States and President Carter in pushing the Soviet Union to respect the humanitarian commitments it undertook.

I think it's possible today, too, just as it was possible in 1970s.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Well, God bless you. You inspire us all. I really appreciate you being here.

Thank you, Assistant Secretary Fried. Thank you very much. I appreciate your testimony and your work.

The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, the hearing was adjourned at 4:03 p.m.]

APPENDICES

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

Let me join Chairman Brownback in welcoming Secretary Fried today. This is the fifth time we have had a hearing featuring the Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs to discuss the OSCE and U.S. policy. I have found these hearings to be an excellent venue not only for building a cooperative relationship with the State Department on issues of common concern, but also for drawing wider attention to these issues and the OSCE's useful role in addressing them.

There is no doubt that the OSCE's most unique strength is its human dimension, an integral aspect of the organization's comprehensive approach to security. Russia and a small grouping of other repressive regimes have increasingly attempted to divert attention away from their poor rights records, claiming that the real problem is that OSCE is paying too much attention to human rights. Simply put, these countries—Belarus and Uzbekistan among them—do not want to implement OSCE commitments they have freely accepted.

Russia's ranting and obstructionist behavior at the OSCE in Vienna has sent scores of diplomats and foreign ministers scrambling to fix the "Russia problem." To their credit, Russian officials know how to play the diplomatic game and know their best chance of getting what they want is by going into the details of the organization others often overlook.

Under the guise of "reforms" Moscow and her allies are intent on hamstringing the OSCE's human rights work, seeking to curtail the critically important Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, sidelining human rights issues to a closed-door committee, and undercutting vital election observation missions. Is reform needed? Yes, but not in Vienna. Rather we should look for change in the very capitals clamoring for OSCE reforms. The OSCE is a vital element in advancing our values of democracy, human rights and rule of law. I trust that the Department will reject any attempts to undercut the human dimension of the OSCE.

Ultimately, the success of the OSCE as President Gerald Ford remarked in signing the Helsinki Final Act exactly 30 years ago, will be judged, "not only by the promises made, but the promises we keep."

The Commission has welcomed the extent to which the United States has, in recent OSCE ministerial preparations, judged success in terms other than agreement for agreement's sake. We encourage the United States to hold firm on such things as adherence to Istanbul commitments. The Department should support what is effective for the organization in achieving its worthy goals rather than whatever compromises might provide some short-term relief to strained bilateral relations.

Ultimately, I want to see the OSCE shed light on human rights abuses wherever they occur. I want the OSCE to help thwart trafficking in persons and to defend the right of people to practice their own faith. I want the OSCE to inspire the new generations emerg-

ing in transition countries to make a difference not only for themselves, but for their countries and the world. I want the OSCE to counter anti-Semitism and other forms of hatred and intolerance, as well as the widespread discrimination against Roma.

None of this, I would add, is to the detriment of work in other areas. Those of us on the Helsinki Commission support, as does the United States, a wide variety of initiatives undertaken in the security dimension of the OSCE, including efforts to combat terrorism, to control the flow of small arms and light weapons, to destroy excess stocks of ammunition. In the economic dimension, we have often looked for needed efforts to combat official corruption and organized crime that stymie foreign investment and economic progress.

Freedom, safety and economic opportunity are mutually reinforcing, and I look forward to hearing the Assistant Secretary speak about these areas at today's hearing.

**PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. DANIEL FRIED, ASSISTANT
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN
AFFAIRS**

INTRODUCTION

Chairman Brownback, Co-Chairman Smith, Senators, Congressmen: I am very pleased to be here in the year marking the 30th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act to discuss the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and its role in advancing the interests and values of our nation. The principles enshrined in that Act, linking security among states to respect for human rights in states, form the core agenda of the OSCE today. They are also at the core of the President's foreign policy agenda, and I know they are of great importance to you.

In his second inaugural address, the President declared a clear policy of promoting democracy and freedom throughout the world. In her opening remarks at this year's OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Secretary Rice reaffirmed President Bush's deep commitment to the OSCE and its important work in advancing freedom. Around the globe people are standing up and embracing the values of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms as enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act. They are calling on their governments to guarantee and respect these inalienable human rights. The OSCE is front and center in helping them achieve this goal. I appreciate this opportunity to state my personal commitment to working with you to pursue the course the Helsinki process charted so many years ago: a course to security and stability in Europe and Eurasia.

The OSCE is a tremendous asset and platform for advancing a great range of issues in the Euro-Atlantic region. On human rights and support for democracy, the so-called human dimension, its expertise and accomplishments are unparalleled. Its election observation methodology represents the gold standard in this field, and the OSCE's efforts have been instrumental in advancing democracy. The organization has undertaken groundbreaking work in the promotion of tolerance and in combating anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance. The OSCE is a valuable partner in our joint efforts to promote basic freedoms and human rights, including religious freedom and freedom of the media. Its field missions are vital to the OSCE's work in many areas, and we strongly support these presences. The OSCE also performs important work in the security and economic spheres; it is a key instrument in helping solve regional conflicts, in countering terrorism and combating trafficking in persons.

The OSCE's successes would not be possible without support from Members of Congress and their dedicated staffs. I want to thank you for your work through the Helsinki Commission and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. Both have been keys to building a consensus for our shared agenda among the legislatures and publics of the OSCE's 55 participating States. We greatly value Congressman Hastings' activism as President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly on OSCE issues and the involvement of the parliamentary assembly in election monitoring and other important work. Congressman Smith, Senator Brownback, your personal efforts have helped keep the OSCE a vibrant, modern organization

with its pioneering work on combating the rising scourge of anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance, and on the despicable business of trafficking in persons.

Since 1989, Europe has undergone a historic transformation and the OSCE has played a vital role in advancing freedom from Central Europe to Central Asia, as the frontier of freedom has progressed. Peaceful, democratic transitions in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan are testaments to the OSCE's vital role in promoting freedom and democracy. Citizens of these countries demanded their leaders' adherence to OSCE commitments and to the principles of freedom and democracy, and said "enough" to fraudulent elections.

Moreover, those initial fraudulent elections bore witness to the importance of thorough and objective election observation—observation which provided both the international community and domestic citizens with a credible assessment upon which to base demands for a legitimate outcome. The OSCE is continuing to work with the governments and civil society in those countries to help them create and maintain democratic and open societies based on the rule of law, which will make them stable and secure neighbors.

Elsewhere, OSCE election experts watched as the Afghan people cast their ballots in Afghanistan's unprecedented elections. OSCE's election observation methodology is now the gold standard for international and domestic election observations. Established democracies such as France, Spain, the United States and U.K. have taken OSCE suggestions on board in their efforts to hone the tools of democracy.

The OSCE is going through a process of examining ways to increase its effectiveness, and looking at the Panel of Eminent Persons Report's suggestions as one source for possible change. I do not believe that this is a time of crisis for the OSCE. Rather, it is a time of opportunity for participating States to re-commit to fulfilling the agreements we have made and exploring ways to meet today's emerging challenges: trafficking, organized crime, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, counterterrorism, and illegal migration.

We want to preserve and enhance the ability of participating States and NGOs to stand up in the OSCE context, whether at the Permanent Council meetings or at the HDIM, and speak openly and frankly about how we are all living up to our OSCE commitments. Just as we value these exchanges in which countries like Belarus, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and others are called upon to defend their records on human rights, democracy and freedom, we value speaking about our own progress and commitments. When the U.S. stands up and talks openly about issues in this country, we set an example of what can be accomplished when a state opens itself to scrutiny and recognizes the value in publicly explaining its own behavior.

We are endeavoring to work constructively with Russia in the OSCE and we are consulting with our Russian colleagues on issues related to reform, OSCE's financial arrangements, and areas for co-operation within the OSCE. We have consistently made clear the fundamental importance of OSCE's democracy and human rights work, independence of institutions, field missions, extra budgetary contributions, election observations, and other issues, and our en-

gagement with Russia will not compromise our commitment to standing up for OSCE's core values and principles.

The OSCE is a unique forum allowing us full engagement with Russia, as we raise our concerns about the strength and depth of Russian commitment to human rights, democratic reform and the rule of law while still working together on many issues that secure peace and growth in Europe. We want to work with Russia as a partner to support the progress of the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus in becoming more prosperous, democratic and secure.

As President Bush noted in his 2005 Inaugural Address, peace depends upon the expansion of freedom; the work of the OSCE is directly related to that objective. I believe the OSCE is very capable of taking on new tasks including a broader role in advancing freedom and security in the world. The Helsinki Process, with its focus on creating a political space for reformers and reform, did great things for Central and Eastern Europe and can serve as an inspiration for the governments and people of the Broader Middle East and Asia as well.

The OSCE also has a role to play in helping to win the global war on terrorism. Promoting security interests collectively through the OSCE allows the United States to share costs and political responsibility with other states and, at the same time, to coordinate actions, avoiding duplication and maximizing success. Today, I would like to address in detail the OSCE's value to the United States, the OSCE's recent accomplishments and plans for the future, and calls to refocus and restructure the OSCE.

IMPORTANCE OF THE OSCE TO THE UNITED STATES

U.S. participation in the OSCE advances U.S. interests and our values by promoting democracy, strengthening respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and advancing arms control, confidence- and security-building measures, as well as economic prosperity and sustainable environmental policies. The OSCE also has a role to play in helping to win the global war against terrorism, and it is a vehicle for the kind of "transformational diplomacy" of which Secretary Rice has spoken so often. The OSCE has an instrumental role in transforming societies into democratic members of the international community. Promoting our interests collectively through the OSCE allows the United States to share both costs and political responsibility with other states and, at the same time, to coordinate actions to avoid duplication and maximize success.

The United States continues to make effective use of the OSCE's flexible and comprehensive approach to security, which recognizes human rights, as well as economic and environmental issues as integral factors in fostering security and stability. Common principles agreed by consensus give the United States and other OSCE participating states shared values and commitments on which to act. The OSCE can bring the weight of 55 nations acting together to bear on problems that no one nation can solve alone.

The OSCE has made a significant contribution in the post-Communist era toward achieving America's goal of a free, whole, and peaceful Europe, though much still needs to be done. The OSCE is adapting to new challenges and providing models for addressing

tough issues such as intolerance, border management and control of small arms and light weapons (SA/LW), models from which the United Nations and other international organizations draw. At the same time, OSCE resources are modest. It depends on the contributions of its member states. Any new initiatives must represent the top priorities of the United States and other participating states.

REFORM AND FUTURE OSCE ACTIVITIES

One of the key tasks facing the OSCE this fall is the ongoing discussion regarding the scope and nature of reforms of the organization's structures and activities. We are closely examining those proposals that might enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization and do not undercut its work in the human dimension. We look forward to working with the Slovenian Chair, the EU and all other participating States to find ways to do just that.

Our goal will be to preserve the independence and flexibility of the institutions and funding and missions that we so value. We want the OSCE's institutions and missions to be adequately funded and staffed, with flexible and rational mandates, able to respond with resources—both financial and human—to developing situations. We want the OSCE to look forward to what more it can do, and what it can do better, and that to us, does not mean more bureaucracy, more meetings, more layers of authority, or more centralized control over institutions or field missions. We welcome your ideas and thoughts as we go through the reform process.

The OSCE's most important assets are its institutions and the 17 field presences on the front lines of democracy and human rights from the Balkans to Central Asia. The United States strongly supports OSCE field work and believes the day-to-day efforts of OSCE field offices are critical to promoting OSCE commitments, especially democratic values and international human rights standards. In their work with host governments, NGOs and the public, field missions perform vital work in numerous fields, from institution-building, promotion of democracy and development of civil society to coordinating international efforts at conflict prevention, post-conflict rehabilitation, and conflict resolution.

FIGHT AGAINST INTOLERANCE

The OSCE's pioneering work fighting racism, anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance has become the standard by which other international organizations' efforts—including those of the United Nations—are measured. The OSCE's work to prevent hate crimes and discrimination by confronting the roots of intolerance, strengthening respect for ethnic and religious diversity, and providing an environment free from fear of persecution or prejudice, are top priorities for the United States. The OSCE tackles these challenges through programs and projects in the fields of legislative reform, law enforcement training, education on the Holocaust and anti-Semitism, and projects to combat hate speech on the Internet, while still focusing on protecting freedom of expression. The United States has provided significant political and financial support to the activities of the OSCE's Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in these areas, and most recently we sec-

ended an expert to the post of Legal Advisor on Hate Crimes for ODIHR's Tolerance Program.

Thanks to intense efforts by the U.S. Government, in close collaboration with NGO partners, the OSCE established three Personal Representatives on Tolerance in December 2004. Throughout 2005, these three Representatives—on anti-Semitism, on intolerance against Muslims, and on racism, xenophobia and discrimination, including against Christians and members of other religions—have traveled to OSCE States to raise awareness of OSCE commitments and to spread support for projects to assist OSCE States implement these commitments. The Representatives work closely with ODIHR in a cooperative environment, but are free to travel and undertake new projects independent of ODIHR. We will work closely with the incoming Belgian Chairmanship to ensure a mandate for these representatives which gives them the tools they need to fulfill the mission given to them.

The OSCE Cordoba Conference, held in Spain in June 2005 drew high-level attention not only to the problems of anti-Semitism and intolerance, but also to best practices for combating these scourges. The conference attracted over 700 governmental and non-governmental participants, including approximately 15 ministerial-level participants. The U.S. urged OSCE States to do more to implement their commitments to the 2004 Berlin and Brussels Decisions. The Cordoba Declaration reiterated one of the most important points in the previous declarations, that “international developments or political issues, including those in Israel or elsewhere in the Middle East, never justify anti-Semitism.” The declaration committed States to “reject the identification of terrorism and extremism with any religion, culture, nationality or race.” In these two areas, the OSCE is ahead of any other international organization, including the UN.

U.S. goals for this year's Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, held in Warsaw last month, were successfully met. They included reinforcing our commitment to human rights and democracy, and showing support for NGOs working in these fields; generating political will among States for implementing OSCE commitments; responding accurately to criticism of the U.S. about media freedom and human rights and the war on terrorism, and building support for U.S. positions on tolerance conferences, reappointment of the three Personal Representatives on Tolerance, OSCE reform, and other issues. In addition to delegations from participating States, a record number of over 300 NGOs also participated in this year's HDIM—showcasing the OSCE's special ability to promote civil society through active cooperation.

NEXT STEPS IN COMBATING INTOLERANCE

The series of high-level conferences over the past three years has done much to set in motion important OSCE work—particularly by ODIHR and the three Personal Representatives—to combat intolerance and promote respect for diversity. At these conferences, 55 nations committed to collect hate crime statistics, share information with ODIHR, strengthen education to combat intolerance and consider increasing training for law enforcement officials. ODIHR launched an online database to compare national hate crimes legis-

lation, track incidents of intolerance and anti-Semitism, and disseminate best practices for combating intolerance. We support these initiatives and will work to ensure they continue. We also strongly support the work of the Personal Representatives and support their re-appointment in January 2006 to finish the important work they have only just begun.

The success of these tolerance initiatives, of course, depends on their full implementation. There is much to be done: many OSCE participating states still lack hate crime legislation or systems for tracking hate crime, and ODIHR's law enforcement training program has only been piloted in two countries so far. The U.S. believes ODIHR is the right institution to lead OSCE activities promoting tolerance. With the help of ODIHR experts and the three Personal Representatives, however, we believe tolerance activities can and should also be mainstreamed into all OSCE work, including in the field missions and the Special Police Matters Unit.

OSCE tolerance conferences have exemplified the benefits of the organization's flexible and comprehensive approach to security by responding to specific and immediate issues of concern, such as the rise of anti-Semitism and the increase in intolerance and discrimination against Muslims after September 11. While OSCE States and the ODIHR Tolerance Program must continue to confront all forms of hate and promote tolerance and respect for members of all ethnicities and religions, the framework we have used until now has effectively drawn attention and resources to urgent problems in the OSCE region. Therefore, we are convinced that future meetings should not diminish the distinct focuses on these problems in exchange for a more generic approach. We believe the OSCE should follow-up on the 2004 Sofia Tolerance decision and the 2005 Cordoba conference, through regional seminars or expert-level meetings on implementation in 2006. These will generate even more enthusiasm among governmental and non-governmental experts for implementing OSCE commitments and focus attention on specific ODIHR projects and national best practices, from which all OSCE states can benefit. We support the idea of having high-level conferences along the lines of Cordoba and its predecessors every other year, to ensure high-level political attention to fulfillment of commitments.

ANTI-TRAFFICKING EFFORTS

Over the past year, the OSCE has continued to expand and strengthen its efforts on combating the modern-day slavery called trafficking in persons. In addition to the establishment of the Special Rep on Combating TIP, this year the Anti-Trafficking Assistance Unit got up and running, headed by a very effective U.S. expert, Michele Clark. We want to see this unit and the Special Rep focus OSCE activities on strategic priorities in this area where the OSCE can make a concrete difference.

Of course, participating States have primary responsibility for combating TIP. The OSCE can assist and provide valuable tools and training such as legislative assistance, police training, and economic programs.

The OSCE has also taken the lead in the international community in establishing a strong code of conduct for its mission mem-

bers to ensure they do not contribute to TIP. This fall, the United States will again introduce a draft ministerial decision to strengthen this work, and have OSCE States agree to take responsibility for their own peacekeeping troops and mission members. This year, we have updated it to include the issue of preventing sexual exploitation by peacekeepers and international mission members. I would like to note the Parliamentary Assembly's declaration in Washington in support of this Ministerial decision, and thank Congressman Smith for his leadership on this initiative.

As you know, the Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Defense briefed the OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation in November 2004 on the DoD "zero tolerance" policy against activities supporting human trafficking. This was the first discussion of human trafficking in the OSCE Forum for Security and Cooperation (FSC).

ELECTION OBSERVATIONS

This past year has been a historic one for the ODIHR, and its active, energetic contributions include conducting impartial election observation missions, most notably in Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan, in partnership with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. ODIHR assisted with expertise to improve presidential and parliamentary elections and to provide robust election observation missions that documented the degree to which elections met OSCE commitments and international standards. In Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan, the OSCE observation missions provided both the international community and domestic citizens with a credible assessment upon which to base demands for a legitimate outcome. OSCE also had an observation role in the recent parliamentary elections in Afghanistan, an OSCE Partner for Cooperation. The United States was a major contributor to the election support team efforts, and we appreciate the financial support from other OSCE participating States in helping the Afghan people accomplish a major democratic milestone so successfully.

In keeping with its OSCE commitments, the United States set an example by inviting OSCE to observe last year's general election in this country, as we have done every year since 1996, consistent with our signing of the 1990 Copenhagen Document. We believe election observers from young democracies that emerged from the former Communist states of Eastern Europe, who participate in observation missions in the United States and other longstanding democracies, become more powerful advocates of better election practices in their own countries. As we expect other countries to abide by their commitments, we must lead by example and be models of cooperation with the OSCE. In this spirit, we just hosted two weeks ago, an ODIHR team for follow-up discussions on our 2004 election.

Upcoming elections in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan will be key tests of those countries' commitment to democracy. The degree to which these elections are judged to be free and fair, and the progress these elections represent compared to past elections in these countries, will be critical to the international community. The OSCE observation missions will play an important role in determining election fairness and we call on all OSCE countries to fully

support all of ODIHR's election observation and democracy promoting activities.

The OSCE's work, through ODIHR, in election monitoring is rightly recognized as superb. Unfortunately, there have been calls by some States to review and even question election-related commitments and methodology. While we are amenable to reviewing areas where ODIHR's effectiveness could be further enhanced, we are strongly against any proposals that would undermine election commitments or impinge on ODIHR's autonomy or effectiveness. We see little need to change something that works so well. The real issue here is not this or that methodology but the lack of political will among some participating States to implement existing commitments and allow the voice of the electorate to be heard.

UZBEKISTAN

Since the May uprising and subsequent crackdown in Andijon, Uzbekistan has taken numerous steps away from providing the freedom that is essential to long-term stability. Among these have been clamp downs on independent media and civil society, including shutting down a number of U.S.-sponsored NGOs and jailing an Uzbek RFE/RL reporter. Nevertheless, the OSCE is still operating with some effect in Uzbekistan, despite restrictions that have prohibited most work on human dimension issues from its center in Tashkent.

An ODIHR team of experts conducted a preliminary investigation into the Andijon events and published a report in June. According to its report, an attack on police, military units and a prison by a group of armed men, an attack we condemned, escalated into a general protest against the Karimov government. Uzbek authorities responded by sending interior ministry troops to quell the violence. Press and human rights groups' reports indicate that these security forces sealed off the area and proceeded to shoot indiscriminately, killing hundreds of civilians—many, if not most of whom were unarmed.

The OSCE report indicates that although Uzbek authorities were initially battling criminal elements, they ultimately turned on uninvolved civilians. The Uzbek Government's version of the security forces' response is unsubstantiated at best and requires a thorough international investigation. The ODIHR team believes the death toll in Andijon to be significantly higher than the official government claim of 173 dead. In addition, the OSCE report cited the socioeconomic situation in Uzbekistan, lack of access to fair trials and a general sense of injustice as the focus of the protest against the Karimov regime, not the desire to create an Islamic Caliphate as the government claims.

The OSCE's ODIHR trial experts are the only international observers permitted by the Uzbek government to observe Uzbekistan's current show-trial of the first 15 people accused of instigating the Andijon violence. The Uzbek government has otherwise prevented independent investigations into the cases of the accused.

These events present a serious challenge to the OSCE, as well as an opportunity to advance freedom. Because of its ability to admonish participating states for not upholding their OSCE commit-

ments and to investigate human rights violations, the OSCE is well-suited to initiate the international response to the tragic events in Andijon and to censure the Uzbek government for its crackdown on civil society. The OSCE's Moscow Mechanism is being discussed in capitals as a possible tool to encourage the Uzbek government to open itself to an international investigation in which, as an OSCE member, it has an equal voice.

BELARUS

Belarus remains an outpost of tyranny in the heart of Europe. Its government fails to respect its citizens by denying them their human rights and freedom. The repression we reported last year has only deepened. New legal measures aim to silence independent voices, monopolize information, and obstruct all elements of political opposition and democratization.

Belarus falls further and further behind in realizing its OSCE commitments. Its parliamentary elections last October were neither free nor fair. Along with the referendum to end presidential term limits, their badly flawed framework testified to the Government's cynical contempt for freedom and democracy.

The regime in Belarus continues to consolidate its monopoly on information. It has intensified its attempts to stifle the besieged independent media. Rather than protecting it, the law straitjackets free speech. The authorities have suspended newspapers, levied crippling fines, and brought specious libel suits to chill dissent. For example, in August, the Government conjured up spurious legal grounds to deregister the publishers of the independent weekly newspapers *Den* and *Kuryer iz Borisova*. After raiding homes and confiscating personal property of three people allegedly involved in posting satirical political cartoons on the Internet, Belarusian authorities proceeded with criminal slander cases against them. In his March report, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Haraszti offered to assist Belarus in reforming its media laws, including exceedingly harsh provisions on libel used to undermine free speech. It should come as no surprise Belarus has ignored the findings and recommendations in Mr. Haraszti's report.

The government of Belarus continues to make it even more difficult, if not impossible, for NGOs, political parties, independent trade unions, and private educational institutions to function. Restrictive legislation adopted this year enhanced the tools available to the regime to punish voices of dissent and reform, including suspension and liquidation of organizations. Recent government measures restrict assistance to prepare for elections, referenda, the recall of MPs, the organization and conduct of meetings, street marches, demonstrations and strikes, among other activities.

MOLDOVA AND TRANSNISTRIA

The OSCE, and in particular the OSCE Mission in Moldova, are working to find long-term solutions to the situation in the break-away region of Transnistria. The U.S. strongly supports the work of the OSCE in Moldova, which forms part of our own strategy—as well as that of the EU—for finding a peaceful resolution which respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Moldova. The

situation in Transnistria shows little improvement. Thanks to the concerted efforts of the OSCE Mission, Tiraspol authorities finally relented in their forcible closure of Latin-script-language schools. In Dorotskoye, however, Tiraspol authorities refused Moldovan farmers access to their fields for this year's growing season, denying them their livelihood and creating a humanitarian crisis.

Through the OSCE, we have strongly condemned such actions, and reiterated our demand that the Transnistrians grant the farmers access to their fields and restore the normal movement of people and goods. U.S. and the EU visa restrictions remain in effect against leading Transnistrian officials, including those directly involved with the Latin-script-language school crisis. We welcomed Ukrainian President Yushchenko's initiative to bring new directions to the conflict settlement process and are consulting closely with Ukraine, as well as with Moldova, the EU and Russia, on the way forward. We have continued to urge the Russian Government to use its influence with the Transnistrian leadership in ways conducive to a just settlement of the conflict.

The United States has urged all sides to work transparently with the OSCE to make concrete progress toward a political settlement. We are encouraged by the agreement reached between the sides and the existing mediators (the OSCE, Russia and Ukraine) on September 27 in Odessa to invite the United States and the EU to join the negotiations in the five-sided format as observers, and we joined the round of talks scheduled for late October. We support the EU's project for international monitoring of the Transnistrian segment of the Moldova-Ukraine border, scheduled to start in December, which we believe should support more effective enforcement of customs laws and regulations. We have also urged the Russian Federation to resume, in cooperation with the OSCE, its withdrawal of forces from the region in accordance with its commitments undertaken at the 1999 OSCE summit in Istanbul.

TURKMENISTAN

In Turkmenistan, the human rights situation remains extremely poor where all fundamental rights are ignored and repressed by an authoritarian government. The de facto expulsion of OSCE Head of Center Ambassador Badescu in 2004 was a grave disappointment. The new Ambassador, Ibrahim Djikic, and his staff labor under difficult circumstances, working for one of the very few organizations that can provide the people of Turkmenistan with connections to the outside world.

RUSSIA

We used the OSCE HDIM to raise our concerns over specific developments and trends in the Russian Federation and to urge that country to show through constant action how it is advancing democracy, human rights and the rule of law at home and beyond. We remain concerned about the freedom of the media, NGOs, political parties, and national and religious minorities, as well as the rule of law. In Warsaw, we raised our increasing concern over the latest steps in a pattern of harassment against the human rights NGO, the Russian Chechen Friendship Society (RCFS), which pro-

motes reconciliation between the Russian and Chechen peoples. We recognize and condemn without qualification the terrorist elements in the conflict and deplore the grievous atrocities committed by separatist forces, but this does not excuse abuses committed by Russian forces, a lack of meaningful accountability for such abuses, or discriminatory attitudes on the part of Russian authorities towards displaced persons from Chechnya. We again urged the Russian Federation to halt these abuses and hold their perpetrators, both military and civilian, accountable. The solution needed in Chechnya is a political one, not a military one, we have repeatedly called on all sides to work toward such a solution.

OSCE FIELD MISSIONS IN THE BALKANS

Southeastern Europe remains the area with the highest concentration of OSCE field activity, a legacy of the organization's major role before and after the Balkan wars. The OSCE, in fact, devotes 72 percent of its total personnel and 53 percent of its total budget to the six Balkan missions.

With a total staff of nearly 1200 international and locally-hired personnel, the Mission in Kosovo is the largest OSCE field operation. The Mission is a distinct component of the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo, and is mandated with institution- and democracy-building and promoting human rights and the rule of law. The Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, the OSCE's second largest with 729 total personnel, was created in 1995 in the wake of the Dayton Peace Accords. The basic function of the Mission is to help rebuild Bosnia and Herzegovina as a multi-ethnic, democratic society. The four other Balkan missions are located in Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, Croatia, and Albania, and range in size from 338 to 120 personnel. All four are involved in helping to develop democratic institutions and processes, in monitoring and protecting human rights, and in promoting greater integration and inter-ethnic understanding.

While the OSCE has been gradually reducing the size of these six missions, it must not pull out of the Balkans too quickly. The political climate throughout the region remains unstable, while democratic institutions and respect for human rights and the rule of law are not yet firmly rooted. Organized crime and the trafficking of drugs, weapons, and human beings remain region-wide problems.

The OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMiK) is the OSCE's largest field mission. It has a record of success there, including through police training. As we prepare for final status talks for Kosovo, we must also begin to look at the role for the OSCE once those talks are concluded. Kosovo Head of Mission Wnendt has suggested that the OSCE and OMiK could play a greater role in institution-building and monitoring at the municipal level—drawing upon the OSCE's strong field presence in Kosovo and its traditional strengths.

The OSCE has been involved in Kosovo since it was the CSCE in the early 1990s, and its experience will continue to play an important role in building a stable future.

GEORGIA, ABKHAZIA AND SOUTH OSSETIA

The United States supports a peaceful resolution of the South Ossetian conflict that respects the territorial integrity of Georgia. The situation in South Ossetia has been tense but without major outbreaks of violence for most of 2005, compared to 2004. Unfortunately, ten civilians were recently wounded in a mortar attack September 20. We have called on all sides to respect existing agreements and refrain from carrying out any further military activities in or near the zone of conflict. Recent tensions underscore the need for the sides to move forward with OSCE participation toward demilitarization and a political settlement. We believe the OSCE Mission should be enlarged to enable more comprehensive monitoring of the zone of conflict.

We welcome the ongoing and invigorated efforts of the Georgian Government to develop a viable game plan, and call on Tbilisi, Moscow and the Ossetians to work together toward a settlement offering Ossetia genuine autonomy within a unified Georgia.

Progress toward a political settlement of the Abkhaz conflict is slow. After a long pause marked by increased tensions and complicated Abkhaz "presidential" elections, the Georgian and Abkhaz sides returned to discussions in the "Geneva" format of the UN Friends of the Secretary General in May 2005 and participated in additional meetings in the Friends framework in Tbilisi. We hope for progress in the coming months on security assurances. We urge the Georgian Government and Abkhaz leaders to advance confidence building measures and resume a dialogue toward a settlement. We need to use the OSCE Mission in Georgia to assist those efforts. We seek Moscow's support as well.

We were deeply disappointed by the disbandment, at Russia's insistence, of the OSCE Border Monitoring Operation, which significantly contributed to stability on the Russian-Georgian border. We actively supported the 2005 OSCE training mission for border guards that filled the vacuum left by the closure of the BMO and we encourage the EU to work for a robust program to support monitoring of Georgia's borders.

ADAPTED CFE AND FULFILLMENT OF ISTANBUL COMMITMENTS

Regarding the Adapted Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, the U.S. and NATO position remains that we will not ratify the Adapted CFE Treaty until all remaining Istanbul commitments on withdrawal of Russian forces from Georgia and Moldova have been fulfilled. We welcomed the May 30 Georgia-Russia Foreign Ministers' Joint Statement setting timelines for the withdrawal of Russian forces from two bases in Georgia. Additional steps are needed, including signature of a detailed follow-on agreement. I am happy to note that the initial benchmarks agreed in the Joint Statement, including withdrawal of 40 pieces of Russian armor by September 1, have been met. The two sides still need to resolve the status of the Russian presence at a third base in break-away Abkhazia. We are urging Moscow to match the recent progress in Georgia by restarting its military withdrawal from Moldova, where we have seen no progress since 2003. We continue to stress that resumption of the military withdrawal process would

send an important political signal to the Transnistrian leadership in Tiraspol that the status quo will not last forever. We have told the Russians very bluntly that we believe Moscow's political will is the key to making progress.

ENERGIZING THE ECONOMIC DIMENSION

With the 2003 Economic Strategy Document as a tool, OSCE field missions and the Secretariat have developed projects focusing on boosting entrepreneurship. In addition, the OSCE is continuing to work with participating States to combat money laundering and terrorist financing. The United States and the OSCE are co-sponsoring a three-day, expert-level conference in November to enhance cooperation and share experiences of combating terrorist financing.

The OSCE has worked with partner organizations to map environmental hot spots and address regionally environmental problems that could cause friction between states. One successful program took place in Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan where, despite political tensions, scientists and others worked productively together to improve water quality. This is an excellent example of the OSCE's ability to bring states together to work on issues of mutual concern, where the exercise itself serves as a confidence building measure. The OSCE has also been working in conjunction with the United Nations to identify situations where environmental problems threaten to generate tensions, and then to assist governments in addressing those problems.

I believe there is more that can and should be done within the economic dimension. I am encouraged by the enthusiasm, energy, and expertise of the new Economic and Environmental Activities Coordinator, Mr. Bernard Snoy. My colleagues at our Mission in Vienna tell me he has selected a dynamic team to help him revitalize this important dimension, and I look forward to fresh thoughts for what more we can do in this area. Again, Central Asia seems the right place to focus new attention in this dimension.

COUNTERTERRORISM

Counterterrorism is an area where there is universally good cooperation among all 55 participating States and a united sense of purpose. At last year's Ministerial, the OSCE adopted decisions on such issues as terrorist financing, travel document security, shipping container security and combating the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes. Many of these were U.S. initiatives. It has worked with the participating States to ratify all 12 United Nations Conventions and Protocols related to terrorism. Thus far, over 70 percent of the participating States have done so, almost double the number when the Plan for Action for Combating Terrorism was adopted at the Bucharest Ministerial in December 2002. Work continues on a shipping container security decision for the Ljubljana Ministerial in December 2005, which would encourage all participating States to adapt standards set by the World Customs Organization.

The State Department, through the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, the Office of the Coordinator on Counterterrorism and the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, has

worked closely with the OSCE's Anti-Terrorism Unit to provide much-needed expertise for a range of workshops aimed at helping other participating States improve their effectiveness in areas such as the use of the Internet to recruit terrorists. In November, the Department will co-sponsor a conference to be held in Vienna, which will bring together high-level officials from capitals to discuss new ways to combat terrorist financing. The OSCE's Anti-Terrorism unit is currently headed by a U.S. Foreign Service Officer with a deep background in counter-terrorism work. I believe he can help shape a forward-looking agenda in this area.

SECURITY

The Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC) has continued to play a positive role as an instrument of the Political-Military Dimension of the OSCE. The FSC made a significant step forward last November when it adopted controls on brokering of Small Arms/Light Weapons (SALW), a U.S. initiative that complemented discussions during an Economic Dimension seminar on arms trafficking, demonstrating the value of the OSCE's cross-dimensional work. The FSC remains focused on requests for assistance in the destruction of excess stockpiles of SA/LW and conventional munitions submitted by Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan, with the request from Tajikistan receiving the most attention in 2005. The United States provided \$200,000 to OSCE efforts in Tajikistan for weapons destruction.

The FSC is also considering how best to assist several States in removing the threat of rocket fuel (*mélange*) left over from the Soviet Union through active involvement of OSCE field presences. The OSCE Mission to Georgia successfully completed a project turning this toxic, dangerous rocket fuel into fertilizer; the OSCE Office in Yerevan, Armenia, is implementing a similar project with substantial U.S. support. The Conflict Prevention Center has coordinated with NATO and other regional organizations to examine the rocket fuel situation in Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia (Kaliningrad) and Ukraine. Such cross-dimensional activities of OSCE field presences enhance their value to the host countries. The OSCE's small Secretariat allows for flexibility, while obligating the participating States to take on substantial responsibilities in project development and execution, in full coordination with the EU, NATO and other organizations.

The FSC continues to promote confidence- and security-building measures throughout the OSCE region, with the broad goal of enhancing military transparency and stability. Years of focused efforts to improve implementation were rewarded when Kazakhstan recently hosted its first-ever Vienna Document 1999 (VD-99) Military Contacts event. The FSC will also conduct a high-level Military Doctrine Seminar February 14-15, 2006, in Vienna. Then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell, attended the first such Seminar at OSCE in 1990.

POLICING

OSCE participating States increasingly recognize that without effective law enforcement and genuine respect for the rule of law and

the institutions responsible for upholding it, social, political, and economic stability cannot take root. In this respect, the OSCE has established police assistance programs in eight of its seventeen field missions: four in the Balkans, three in the Caucasus, and one in Central Asia, in Kyrgyzstan. The focus of OSCE police-related assistance in these eight field missions is on capacity and institution-building, on developing the day-to-day operational policing skills that allow these emerging democracies to meet the risks and challenges posed by trans-national and organized crime and by trafficking in drugs, arms, and human beings. An equally important goal, however, is to build trust and confidence between the police forces and the people they serve by promoting communication between them and by involving local communities in the work of the police. The underlying principle is that the police can effectively—or even more effectively—do their job within the accepted norms of democratic societies.

OUTREACH

The OSCE Partners for Cooperation became more active this year after a Ministerial decision to enhance OSCE-Partner activities last December. In June, the Partners participated in a side-event at the Annual Security Review Conference to discuss Security issues that were relevant to them. At the High Level Consultations in September, Mediterranean and Asian Partners made respective statements calling for enhancement of OSCE-Partner ties. The U.S. supports Partner efforts to enhance their involvement in OSCE activities. We encouraged the Mediterranean Partners to make joint proposals to the Organization on ways they could cooperate, to which they responded by presenting ideas on how to enhance their participation in the daily functioning of the OSCE. While the U.S. is supportive of some of their ideas, such as establishing contact points at OSCE institutions, we would like to see them initiate practical cooperation before considering larger scale commitments like funding Partner projects or granting them participating state status. First steps could be for them to send personnel to OSCE election observation missions and to send representatives to visit OSCE institutions like ODIHR.

LJUBLJANA MINISTERIAL

At the Ljubljana Ministerial in December, we will highlight the accomplishments of the OSCE in this anniversary year, particularly its success as a platform for the promotion of freedom and democracy. At the same time, we will build support for the important work which still lies ahead. We will again strongly urge Russia to fulfill all its Istanbul commitments. We expect the Ministerial to endorse OSCE work on promoting tolerance, anti-trafficking, gender equality, shipping container security, small arms and light weapons, MANPADS, and the destruction of excess stockpiles of ammunition and weapons.

The issue of how the OSCE funds itself is still unresolved but we hope by the Ministerial to have agreement on new OSCE scales of assessment. Russia is still seeking a dramatic reduction in its contributions to the OSCE, and remains the lone holdout among

OSCE's 55 participating States on new scales. In our view, proposals to reduce a single State's contributions radically cannot be the basis for the kind of serious discussions needed among OSCE States.

The United States stands behind the criteria for adjustment of the scales adopted in 2001 and 2002—assessments based on the political nature of the organization as well as nations' capacity to pay, but within ceilings and floors on contributions. All participating states benefit from the OSCE and all use the organization to advance their national interests. The OSCE achieves results at a comparatively modest cost. We hope other participating states will adopt responsible approaches and negotiate constructively on this issue in order to allow the OSCE to concentrate on fulfilling its important mandates. We note the OSCE budget process has improved markedly over the past several years and hope we will have agreement on a 2006 budget by the end of December as well. Systems put in place last year to track budget allocations and expenditures more efficiently are already providing more transparency and accountability.

CONCLUSIONS

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe has been a successful vehicle for managing security challenges over the past thirty years. Its record of achievements over the past year is impressive. With strong U.S. political and financial support, the OSCE sent rapid infusions of OSCE election observers, experts, advisors, and political leadership in response to calls for assistance from Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan during their political transitions. Also with strong U.S. support, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office appointed three Personal Representatives in December 2004 to combat anti-Semitism, discrimination against Muslims, and racism. These individuals are working to engage with individual governments and non-governmental organizations on OSCE's tolerance work.

The OSCE's Conference on Anti-Semitism and on Other Forms of Intolerance, held in Cordoba in June 2005, kept the spotlight on anti-Semitism as well as other tolerance issues—racism, xenophobia, and anti-Muslim and anti-Christian discrimination. The Cordoba Declaration reaffirmed the commitments of OSCE states and called for additional work on education, legislation and law enforcement.

The OSCE plays a unique and vital role in the advance of freedom and democracy throughout the Euro-Atlantic area. On economic development, the OSCE promotes good governance and helps countries put systems in place to fight corruption. On political-military issues such as the fight against terrorism, border security, small arms and light weapons, and excess stockpiles, the OSCE fills crucial niche gaps. It has proven to be an effective diplomatic tool that complements our bilateral diplomatic and assistance efforts throughout Europe and Eurasia.

The OSCE faces new challenges and opportunities ahead, and we hope the reform process will result in making its missions and institutions better able to adapt and respond to changing circumstances. The U.S. will continue to work with its partners with-

in the OSCE to advance the shared objectives of the trans-Atlantic community. Thank you.

RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. SAM BROWNBACK, CHAIRMAN, TO HON. DANIEL FRIED, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS

While a Member of the U.S. Congress, Alcee Hastings, serves as President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE. Historically the top positions in the OSCE have not been held by Americans. Why is this the case? Do you believe that Americans deserve to have an active role and serve in the top ranks of the OSCE? Should the U.S. take a more aggressive stance in getting Americans into some of the critical positions in the OSCE?

American citizens are generally well-represented at the OSCE. U.S. citizens currently hold 10 of 162 positions on the headquarters staff, and 87 of 675 positions on the field mission staff. These numbers have been typical of U.S. representation at the OSCE historically. We seek to maintain a level of representation throughout the organization (12%) commensurate with our financial contribution to the OSCE (overall, 12.5%).

U.S. identifies key positions within field missions it would like to fill with Americans and generally relies upon personnel contractor to provide identify and forward those candidates to the OSCE for consideration. We work closely with Secretariat to ensure U.S. candidates are given full consideration, and that the OSCE continues to select the best candidates for positions.

In 2004 and 2005, Americans were appointed to senior positions in OSCE Secretariat, including the Heads of the new Anti-Trafficking Unit and the Anti-Terrorism Unit. Americans hold senior posts within ODIHR, including Director of Democratization. Also, an American is Head of Internal Oversight in the Secretariat (a Director Level position).

At more senior levels, the United States also has a strong record of representation. Of the OSCE's 17 field presences, three are currently headed by Americans: Moldova, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Ukraine. Three deputy heads of mission are also Americans, in Armenia, Serbia and Montenegro, and Croatia. This represents 18 percent of the 34 senior field mission positions.

We are proud to have a U.S. Member of Congress, Alcee Hastings, currently serving as President of the Parliamentary Assembly. Rep. Hastings' leadership in that OSCE body is invaluable.

In your view, has the OSCE become too bureaucratic and inflexible? And if you agree this is a problem, what steps should the U.S. take to deal with the problem? How can the United States best influence the organization?

Certainly, any organization must guard against oversized bureaucracy and potential ossification. The OSCE, when compared with other large multilateral organizations, is remarkably flexible and lean. In the 17 field presences, there are only a total of 654 seconded and contracted fixed term staff, of which 79 (or 12 percent) are U.S. citizens.

Another aspect of the organization is noteworthy: all OSCE tenure is temporary. The OSCE constantly rotates all staff, with no one serving more than seven years in any one position at mid and

entry levels and no more than four years for senior-level positions, under current staff regulations. OSCE leadership is not immune from this term limit, and we believe the organization frequently getting “new blood” is one aspect of its dynamism.

Has the United States reenergized and reengaged the security components of the OSCE's mission, especially in this post 9/11 environment?

Yes. Just after September 11, the OSCE developed a comprehensive strategy to address 21st Century Threats. Since 2001, largely based on U.S. proposals, the OSCE expanded work on counter-terrorism, suggesting ways participating States could increase travel document, shipping container, and border management security. The OSCE continued intensified efforts to promote resolution of regional conflicts while working to improve tolerance, basic human rights and fundamental freedoms, which are essential to long term stability and security. The OSCE's Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC) has taken concrete steps to address the spread and accumulation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SA/LW) and stockpiles of conventional munitions. In particular, the United States has forged consensus on standards for SA/LW End User Certificates, guidelines for common MANPADS control efforts, and the Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition. The FSC also produced and distributed SA/LW Best Practice Guides, which were favorably received at the UN SA/LW meeting, and has begun work on similar guides addressing conventional ammunition.

It is expected that Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov will participate in the Ljubljana Ministerial to continue to press for undesirable changes to OSCE. Will Secretary Rice attend the Ministerial to ensure that there is a vigorous counter?

The United States is open to changes that improve the effectiveness of the OSCE, but do not subtract from the important work the organization is currently doing in the human, political military, and economic and environmental dimensions. The Ljubljana Ministerial should be the capstone event of the 30th anniversary year of the Helsinki Final Act. We will send a strong delegation to the Ministerial to push forward the U.S. agenda, and our delegation will combat vigorously any efforts to weaken the OSCE's core capabilities, particularly in the areas of democracy and human rights work. A decision has not yet been made as to the Secretary's attendance at the Ministerial.

In his 2003 Whitehall speech, President Bush talked about past mistakes of supporting stability at the expense of democracy. Can you address the tension between stability and democracy in Central Asia?

President Bush made clear in his 2003 Whitehall speech, and in his Second Inaugural Address, that the security of the United States depends upon the spread of freedom and democracy throughout the world. In both speeches, the President noted that “freedom, by definition, must be chosen, and defended by those who

choose it. Our part, as free nations, is to ally ourselves with reform, wherever it occurs.”

The OSCE, in its 30-year history, has been an excellent forum in which to ally with reform. The OSCE allows the United States and others to encourage NGOs from 55 participating States to stand up and criticize the shortcomings of their own governments. The OSCE encourages engagement and dialogue, where all States are open to compliment and criticism, and can likewise lay out the case for their own actions.

In engaging with Central Asian participating States, we see the advance of the President’s freedom agenda. OSCE observers monitored elections in Central Asia (and elsewhere) in 2005. OSCE field missions are involved in activities which support the building of civil society, the economic empowerment of youth and women, the training of police and government officials, and NGO organizational skills. These activities lend to both the democratization of societies and their long-term stability. The OSCE continues to be a tool to advance the President’s freedom agenda while engaging with our 54 fellow participating States.

Is the United States willing to support invoking the OSCE’s Moscow Mechanism in response to the Andijon massacre? Mahbuba Zokirova, a witness at the ongoing Andijon trials, confirmed that Uzbek military forces opened fire on unarmed civilians. Is Embassy Tashkent monitoring her welfare and whereabouts given the prospects of retribution by the regime? Is the Department at all concerned that Uzbekistan might leave the OSCE? What is the state of our relations with Uzbekistan?

Debate within OSCE over possible use of OSCE’s Moscow Mechanism to investigate gross human rights violations in Uzbekistan continues. The United States and other OSCE participating States are considering the utility of the Moscow Mechanism, along with other measures aimed at convincing the Government of Uzbekistan that stability derives from legitimacy, which requires democracy and respect for human rights. We remain concerned about the human rights situation in Uzbekistan, but have not yet made a determination as to whether we would consider invoking the Moscow Mechanism.

The U.S. Embassy in Tashkent has worked closely with the wider diplomatic community to monitor the welfare of all witnesses in the Andijon trial. We are closely watching Mrs. Zokirova’s situation and will continue to do so. We understand that Mrs. Zokirova has returned safely to her home.

Some of the most egregious human rights violations in the OSCE region are occurring in Chechnya. What role should the OSCE play in addressing the situation in Chechnya?

It remains our position that the conflict in Chechnya requires a political solution. We have made this point repeatedly to the Russians and continue to urge Russia to establish meaningful accountability for human rights violations by Russian armed forces in Chechnya. The OSCE can play a key role in this process and help to highlight what needs to be done in Chechnya.

At the same time, we condemn the acts of terrorism and other abuses, such as the Beslan massacre, that have been committed by some armed Chechen groups.

We have urged Russia to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Chechen legislative elections scheduled for November 27, 2005, will be free and democratic.

What are the Department's views regarding how the new government in Kyrgyzstan is doing, and what the OSCE is doing to assist? Are the Kyrgyz fully utilizing OSCE as a resource during this important time of transition in that country?

On July 10, Kyrgyzstan held a presidential election that, although marred by some violations, reflected the will of the people. We are encouraging President Bakiyev and his recently-formed government to continue the fight against corruption, forge ahead with democratic reforms, in particular constitutional reform, judicial reform, implementation of OSCE electoral recommendations, and bringing its media laws and practices in line with international standards.

The OSCE is actively engaged in working with the Government of Kyrgyzstan.

Following the March 2005 popular uprising that ousted the Akayev government, the OSCE developed a Work Plan in coordination with Kyrgyz authorities to advance democratic and economic reform in key areas-such as election support, security assistance, police reform, and development of independent media. Unfortunately, the Kyrgyz government has made only limited progress on these reforms.

The United States has been a strong supporter of the OSCE Center in Kyrgyzstan and has provided substantial funds in extra-budgetary contributions to the continued operations of the Center in the Human, Political/Military as well as Economic-Environmental Dimensions.

We look to the OSCE to remind the Government and citizens of Kyrgyzstan that stability derives from legitimacy, which requires democracy.

You mention working with Russia as a partner to support the prospects of the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus to become more prosperous, democratic and secure. Given negative trends in terms of its own democratic development, how do you see Russia playing a positive role in advancing democracy in these regions? Has the United States responded to reports that Russia plans to deport back to Uzbekistan a group of Uzbek immigrants who oppose the regime there?

The U.S. and Russia have complementary interests in Central Asia: a stable region, free from terrorism, developing democratically and economically.

We are both interested in preventing the spread of extremism in the region, and we regularly engage our Russian counterparts on the importance of vibrant and prosperous societies free of oppression for limiting the appeal of extremism.

To the extent that the United States and Russia can find common ground in the cultivation of such democratic political development, we will. To the extent we must defend our principles alone, we shall.

The United States is aware of the Uzbek dissidents in question, continues to monitor their situation, and has been in contact with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

The Helsinki Commission and others have raised continued concern about the lead-contaminated, UN-run camps for several hundred displaced Roma in northern Kosovo. When will these people be relocated? When will their original neighborhood be rebuilt?

The United States continues to work closely with the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) to help address the needs of hundreds of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian internally-displaced persons currently living in three-lead polluted camps in Northern Kosovo. Officials from our mission in Pristina visited the camps on numerous occasions, and are actively working to find a sustainable solution for this vulnerable population.

To date, the United States has committed more than one million dollars to address the health needs of this community as well as assist UNMIK in attempting to construct a temporary relocation site while the Roma's original homes and apartments are being rebuilt. Unfortunately, due to concerns over environmental conditions in a proposed temporary relocation site, plans to move this population were delayed. UNMIK is currently working with a team of U.S. Army environmental engineers to locate a new site while simultaneously developing ways to make the Roma's current living conditions safer.

We are pleased to report however that the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC), with KFOR assistance, has begun to clear the rubble from the original Roma neighborhood. UNMIK anticipates rubble clearing to be complete next year, and will in the interim continue to solicit additional donor funding for the more than 8 million euro return project. The United States will look to use its significant contribution to this effort to help leverage other EU donors in particular to contribute to this important humanitarian issue.

Is there any genuine progress in resolving the Transnistria secessionist issue in Moldova? How do you respond to criticism that the U.S. and the OSCE have been too accommodating to Russia in dealing with Transnistria? How does the recently-initiated EU Border Monitoring Mission affect the OSCE role in Moldova? Ukraine has proposed a settlement plan according to which elections would be held in Transnistria under international supervision. Does the United States support this proposal?

The U.S. is committed to a peaceful resolution of the Transnistria issue that respects Moldova's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Moldovan government has expressed some concerns about the "Yushchenko Initiative." However, the initiative does offer a promising starting point, if combined with effective border control (the goal of the EU Border Assistance Mission), real democratization, and fulfillment of Russia's 1999 OSCE Istanbul Summit commit-

ment to withdraw its forces from Moldova. We continue to urge Russia to resume removal of forces immediately, stressing that resumption of its fulfillment of its Istanbul Commitments in advance of the OSCE Ministerial in Ljubljana on December 5–6 would send a strong signal of progress.

In an important development, the parties invited the U.S. and EU to attend the last round of political settlement negotiations as observers in Chisinau and Tiraspol on October 27–28. After a fifteen-month pause, those talks marked a small step forward toward a settlement of the conflict. We were pleased that the sides, with the assistance of the mediators and observers, were able to reach agreement on a number of issues, such as consultations on an international assessment mission to evaluate conditions for free and fair elections in Transnistria; the exchange of military information; and setting rough parameters for a factory-monitoring mission in Transnistria. We look forward to the next meeting in this format in Moldova on December 15–16, when the U.S. will continue to participate actively as an observer. We will continue to call on Russia to fulfill its Istanbul Commitments immediately and without precondition.

The OSCE is not a traditional international multilateral organization. It doesn't provide economic aid, engage in military operations or even power politics. Rather, it deals in the power of ideas and its influence on civil society. Given that ideas do not recognize borders and given that human rights and human dignity are universal, why is the OSCE not engaging with other governments, organizations and entities outside of the OSCE region? Could it work creatively in Africa, for example, which would clearly benefit from exposure to ideas of human rights and free markets that are the stock and trade of the OSCE and the Helsinki process?

The OSCE engages actively in several ways outside the 55 participating States that make up the OSCE.

Since in 1994, the OSCE has worked with the Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation, which includes Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia.

In addition to the Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation, the OSCE maintains a special relationship with five Asian states: Afghanistan, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mongolia and Thailand. The Partners for Cooperation in Asia began fostering a flexible dialogue with the OSCE in the early 1990s. Japan's partnership started in 1992, Korea's in 1994, and Thailand's in 2000. Afghanistan was granted partnership status in 2003, and Mongolia in 2004.

Both Mediterranean and Asian Partners hold regular Contact Group meetings. In addition, annual Mediterranean seminars have been organized since 2001. Partner countries also can arrange for personnel to make short-term visits to OSCE field missions, and to participate in election observation missions.

Of course, there remain other opportunities for OSCE involvement outside the area "from Vancouver to Vladivostok." The United States is open to consideration of such proposals and will support initiatives to make available OSCE expertise on broad democratization and human rights issues.

Because the bulk of U.S. funding for the OSCE's budget and extra-budgetary projects comes from the geographically-limited FSA and SEED assistance accounts, our ability to support funding for projects outside of the Eastern European and Eurasian area is limited.

RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, CO-CHAIRMAN, TO HON. DANIEL FRIED, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS

You note the importance of the United States forthrightly addressing criticism of its policies and practices. Those who have devoted years of effort to combating torture in OSCE countries and beyond are deeply concerned over ambiguity surrounding the U.S. stance on the use of torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment. How do you respond?

The United States is unequivocally opposed to the use and practice of torture, and fully supports OSCE's work in the fields of torture prevention. No circumstance whatsoever, including war, the threat of war, internal political instability, public emergency, or an order from a superior officer or public authority, may be invoked as a justification for or defense to committing torture. This is a longstanding commitment of the United States, repeatedly reaffirmed at the highest levels of the U.S. Government.

All components of the U.S. Government must act in compliance with the law, including all U.S. constitutional, statutory, and treaty obligations relating to torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. The U.S. Government does not permit, tolerate, or condone torture, or other unlawful practices, by its personnel or employees under any circumstances. U.S. laws prohibiting such practices apply to employees both within the United States and throughout the world. We have moved aggressively to hold accountable those responsible for the abuse of detainees wherever they are held in U.S. custody pursuant to the global war on terrorism. When allegations of torture or other unlawful treatment arise, they are investigated and, if substantiated, prosecuted. Investigations of alleged abuse of detainees in custody are ongoing.

The United States has discussed our position on torture at several OSCE meetings this year, including at the January 27 Permanent Council meeting, at the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly meeting in July, and at the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on terrorism and human rights. On May 6, the United States submitted its latest periodic report to the UN Committee Against Torture. The full text of the report is available on the State Department's website.

The human rights issues before the OSCE in most instances require political will to resolve. Creating new committees behind closed doors with mid-level diplomats will not generate change. The venue for raising serious human rights concerns already exists; it's the Permanent Council, which has the direct link back to capitals where the political will needs to be generated for change. Committees would give the appearance of doing something, but be powerless, and should be opposed. Do you agree?

We are still evaluating the recommendation from the Eminent Persons Panel that the OSCE create three committees beneath the Permanent Council.

We have not yet been convinced of the necessity and/or value of establishing these committees; but we don't exclude that some

steps might help the Permanent Council carry out its work more effectively.

That said, I want to stress that we are committed to protecting the effectiveness of existing OSCE bodies, especially ODIHR and the FSC, and ensuring the continuation of their good work.

The United States has stated its support for pursuing legal privileges and immunities for OSCE staff but not establishing the OSCE as an international institution with legal personality. While there may be some advantages to legal privileges and immunities, would that satisfy those calling for giving the OSCE legal personality? What concretely would be the dangers of seeking legal personality?

We do not support the idea of negotiating a Statute or Charter for the OSCE. Such a document would not meaningfully enhance the OSCE's ability to carry out its tasks, and the effort to craft such a document would require an unjustified diversion of time, effort and political capital from the organization's substantive agenda. The burden is on those who want to change OSCE's status to make the case for legal personality.

Such an initiative could also lead to a need to renegotiate OSCE commitments and other documents, with the resultant risk of weakened OSCE commitments and capabilities.

The recent Human Dimension Implementation review Meeting in Warsaw was a very successful event. In fact, the meeting attracted the largest number of NGOs ever (over 300) from throughout the OSCE region. Has here been focused follow-up on the meeting and the issues raised in Vienna, which is vital to giving the human dimension and interaction with NGOs the political support they deserve and need, and how does the Department view this meeting and where do you stand on attempts to shorten the meeting?

Along with giving the human dimension political support, the HDIM provides participating States and civil society an excellent platform for the exchange of information and serves to facilitate informative discussion. The United States strongly supports the role of civil society and NGOs, which play and have played a vital role in the Helsinki process over the past 30 years. The U.S. strongly supports a proposed Ministerial Statement on the role of civil society and NGOs, which would commit participating States to provide opportunities for the increased involvement of civil society in OSCE activities. We also support efforts by ODIHR and OSCE field missions to build capacity among NGOs in all OSCE participating States.

We will also follow up on other HDIM results through Ministerial decisions in December on: rule of law—which would promote the role of defense lawyers and assist building institutional capacity in this area; tolerance and non-discrimination—a decision that would formalize the schedule of OSCE tolerance conferences and events through 2009; and human rights education.

As for shortening the HDIM, we would be open to considering trimming its duration by a few days as long as this did not hurt the meeting's effectiveness.

You mentioned the role of NGOs in the OSCE context. Ironically, OSCE decision-making operates behind closed doors despite the fact that it is all about promoting openness and transparency. Is the U.S. prepared to press for more openness by allowing NGO and public access to meetings as observers?

We support making as many of the OSCE Permanent Council sessions open to the public as possible. Our views, however, are not shared by all OSCE participating States; there is no consensus on greater transparency.

Many participating States believe that opening Permanent Council sessions to a broader section of the public would diminish the likelihood of candid discussions of issues and argue that countries would be less likely to raise sensitive matters if the diplomatic confidentiality of the debate were in question.

The U.S. will continue to encourage the OSCE Chairman-in-Office to invite a broad range of media, students and representatives of non-OSCE or OSCE partner countries to OSCE meetings.

In a major speech in Kazakhstan two weeks ago, Secretary Rice said: "We understand that the path to democracy is long, and imperfect, and different for every country." Does this mean that the United States has reduced expectations in terms of democracy in Central Asia?

Not at all. Secretary Rice's statement recognizes the varying levels of democratic development within Central Asia, with Kyrgyzstan in the vanguard and Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan trailing far behind.

We look to Kazakhstan to demonstrate its commitment to democracy. Holding a free and fair presidential election that meets international standards and serves as a model for other nations in the region will be a very positive step.

At every opportunity, we remind governments in Central Asia that democracy actually contributes to stability and helps to reduce the attractiveness of extremism when matched by sound social and economic policies.

Commitment to democracy is not just about having "good" elections. Through our assistance programs not only are we helping civil society to monitor elections and undertake political party development, but we are laying the foundation for greater public participation in the political process, including through independent media and a vibrant civil society.

The United States also participates actively in ODIHR election observation missions and regularly addresses democratic shortcomings at the OSCE.

Kazakhstan is seeking the OSCE Chair-in-Office for 2009. The country has a very poor human rights record, which shows no sign of improvement. In fact a leading human rights activist was recently arrested on the very day that Secretary Rice was in the country. With time quickly passing before a decision will have to be made on the bid, where does the U.S. stand on a Kazakh chairmanship? Would an unlikely clean presidential election in early Decem-

ber suffice, or is the U.S. insisting on a wider range of steps? Is the U.S. actively exploring more suitable alternatives for 2009?

Yes, Secretary Rice discussed the matter with President Nazarbayev. U.S. officials have stressed to top Kazakhstani officials the importance of a legitimate process leading to free and fair elections that meet international standards—including media access on an equal basis for all candidates.

We have also told the Kazakhstanis on many occasions that the international community will turn to the OSCE-organized Election Observation Mission for its opinion on the conduct of the elections and that quality access for local observers will be important.

The position of chairman in office can only be filled by a country that has demonstrated a consistent record of observing OSCE values and implementing OSCE commitments.

Kazakhstan's upcoming election, and the degree to which it is judged to be free and fair, will be a critical element for the international community. However, the election forms only a part of the overall equation, and we will continue to urge the Government of Kazakhstan to work toward a complete fulfillment of its OSCE commitments.

The decision on who will fill the OSCE Chair-in-Office for 2009 will be decided at the December 2006 OSCE Ministerial.

Talks on the question of Kosovo's status are soon to begin. Regardless of what these talks produce, how can respect for OSCE norms regarding the right of return, the right to freedom of movement, the specific rights of persons belonging to national minorities, among others be achieved in Kosovo? How does the United States view the role of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo at this time?

The Contact Group has reaffirmed in its guiding principles for future status talks that whatever the status outcome, the rights of all communities in Kosovo must be protected. While Kai Eide's recent report on the political situation in Kosovo and progress on standards implementation notes some achievements, we believe that more must be done, particularly on the return of IDPs/refugees, freedom of movement and security. As part of Kosovo's effort to integrate into Euro-Atlantic institutions—regardless of status outcome—it will be important that Kosovo continue to make progress on the “Standards for Kosovo.”

While it is too early to speculate about the nature of a likely follow-on civil presence in Kosovo after conclusion of the final status talks, we believe the OSCE will play a key role in helping implement any status agreement and ensuring the protection of minority rights.

The OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMiK) is currently the OSCE's largest field mission. It has a record of success there, including helping assemble and train a multi-ethnic, professional police force. As OMIK looks to the future, Kosovo Head of Mission Werner Wnendt has suggested that the OSCE and OMiK could play a greater role in institution-building and monitoring at the municipal level—drawing upon the OSCE's strong field presence in Kosovo and its traditional strengths. The OSCE has been involved in Kosovo since it was the CSCE in the early 1990s, and its experi-

ence will continue to play an important role in building a stable, democratic and multi-ethnic Kosovo.

Turkey has systemically set out to eradicate the Greek Orthodox Church through property expropriation and administrative fiat. Today, there are fewer than 3,500 Greek Orthodox in that country. What serious steps is the United States prepared to take, both within and outside the OSCE, to correct this devolution? What recent efforts has the U.S. undertaken to have the Halki Theological Seminary reopened?

Turkey, a long-time NATO ally, is a secular democracy with a constitutional government, a free press, and a market economy. Over the past five years, the Government has passed significant constitutional and legislative reforms that reduce restrictions on the freedom of religion, association, and expression, as well as protect against torture and reduce the role of the military in government. Work still needs to be done to fully implement the changes, especially in the area of religious freedom. The U.S. has funded human rights and democracy programs in Turkey, and encourages further reforms in the areas of religious freedom, rule of law, and civil rights.

The United States consistently raises concerns about the property rights of Greek Orthodox, Armenian Orthodox, Armenian Catholic, Baha'i, Alevi, Jewish, Protestant, Suriyani, Yazidi, Chaldean, and other religious minorities within Turkey. This is regularly reflected in our Human Rights report and Religious Freedom reports for Turkey.

Continuing restrictions limit the ability of non-Muslim religions to operate. We continue to press Turkish authorities to address these issues, such as Greek Orthodox Church property issues, and reopening the Greek Orthodox Halki Seminary, and difficulties in establishing new Christian churches.

In addition to raising the issue of the Ecumenical Patriarchate's status with Turkish officials on the highest level, we are keeping a close eye on the developments in current policies pertaining to the livelihood of religious communities and religious freedom in Turkey, and pressing for its implementation with Turkish policy makers.

While we feel that these developments are a step in the right direction for Turkey, our close ally and partner in the Global War on Terror, we know that much work remains to be done in order to ensure the continuity of religious minority communities in Turkey. We feel that the European Union accession process offers Turkey the vehicle to continue to make significant progress in providing religious freedom for its citizens and residents. We will continue to be vigilant and use our bilateral relationship to push for reforms and their implementation to protect religious minority communities in Turkey.

The President and past Secretaries of States have consistently met with religious leaders in Turkey while visiting the country. Most recently, Undersecretary Karen Hughes met with the Patriarch during her trip to Istanbul in September.

The plight of the Greek Roma is well known. Authorities in Athens ignore attempts by the OSCE and the United States to end these abuses. What new approach is the United States taking in this matter? Are there other human rights concerns with respect to Greece?

U.S. embassy officers, including the Ambassador, raise the issue of the Greek Roma regularly with the GoG. Embassy and Consulate officers visit Roma camps and meet with Roma officials to ascertain the situation of Roma communities, and to bring concerns of the communities to Government officials. Additionally, they maintain close contact with local and international NGOs who closely follow Roma integration, education, access to education, health, housing, and discrimination issues, among other issues.

The embassy includes Roma representatives at important representational events, such as the 4th of July event at the Ambassador's home, giving them additional access both to the USG and to GoG representatives. Additionally, the embassy includes all discrimination and abuse cases in the Human Rights Report. In the past year, the embassy closely studied the recommendations by the Council of Europe's European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR) and the Council of Europe's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) regarding Roma in Greece, and reported these findings in the Human Rights Report.

Other human rights issues of concern to the United States are detailed in the Human Rights report. One that the embassy and the Greek Government focus a great deal of time and attention on is Trafficking in Persons. Another area that the embassy and especially the UNHCR follow closely are issues related to asylum-seekers, especially unaccompanied/ separated-from-family children who may be asylum seekers, their detention conditions, and their rates of acceptance as refugees.

RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, RANKING MEMBER, TO HON. DANIEL FRIED, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS

What role will the OSCE Missions play in following war crimes trials that are referred by the International Criminal Tribunal in The Hague to local courts in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and perhaps other countries in the region? Is the United States, directly or through the OSCE, providing assistance that will allow these trials to help people in the region to understand what happened in the 1990s and why?

We have worked with our partners to support the ICTY's Completion Strategy, which seeks to conclude trials by 2008 and appeals by 2010 and was endorsed by the UN Security Council. One component of the ICTY's completion strategy is the transfer of mid- to lower-level war crimes indictments to competent domestic jurisdictions. The United States supports the idea of transfers, and, together with the international community, has supported efforts to build capacity in the region for credible domestic trials. As a general matter, we believe that, where possible and appropriate, domestic prosecutions are the preferable option, and that the primary responsibility for deterring and punishing war crimes lies with individual states.

In May of this year, the OSCE agreed in a Permanent Council decision to monitor, within the existing mandates and resources of its field missions in the region, war crime cases on behalf of the ICTY prosecutor. Each of the OSCE field missions in Croatia, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia and Montenegro is fully engaged in developing the capacity of domestic prosecutors and courts to investigate and try war crimes. The U.S. delegation to the OSCE has also supported developing local capacity and increasing public awareness of war crimes through extra-budgetary contributions.

The United States was the single largest contributor to the creation of the Sarajevo War Crimes Chamber, providing \$10 million in 2004. This money, as well as other USG funding for the Belgrade War Crimes Chamber, helped fund state-of-the-art courtrooms capable of providing necessary protective measures for victims and witnesses. The United States also funds training for regional judges and prosecutors in the region, and has an active Department of Justice Regional Legal Adviser program. Resident Legal Advisers provide technical assistance and act in advisory capacity, with strong focus on war crimes issues.

As the Chair of the Second Committee of the OSCE PA, I have focused my efforts on combating corruption and promoting entrepreneurship, particularly among small businesses, and minority-owned and women-owned businesses. How can we strengthen the economic dimension of the OSCE, and what concrete initiatives should the OSCE undertake in the next year in this area?

Much continues to be done in the OSCE Economic and Environmental Dimension. Concretely, two Draft Ministerial Decisions are now being circulated on migration and combating organized crime,

both issues with elements directly related to the economic dimension. A third draft decision, on the 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster, recalls the significance of further OSCE cooperation in the environmental sphere.

The Office of the Economic and Environmental Coordinator is also co-sponsoring, with the U.S. Department of State, a conference for experts from participating States on combating terrorist financing, November 9–12.

The overall strengthening of the Economic and Environmental Dimension is a subject for the ongoing reform discussions. So far there is no consensus on exactly how to increase the capability and profile of the Dimension, as some delegations reject calls to increase resources available or to raise the rank and increase the autonomy of the Economic and Environmental Coordinator.

The OSCE continues to work on economic empowerment of minorities, youth, and women. Examples include: small grants for youth business in Albania; support for young Uzbek entrepreneurs; the continuing battle against trafficking in all its forms; and OSCE Aarhus Centers which serve as a model for environmental cooperation. OSCE work continues in the realm of anti-corruption, including the work of field presences to assist host countries in developing legislation and implementing anti-corruption programs and the publication of a best-practices manual.



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