

DEMOCRACY UNDER SIEGE IN BELARUS

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. President, I wish to update my Senate colleagues on developments in Belarus in my capacity as Chairman of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Helsinki Commission. The Commission continues to pay close attention to events in Belarus especially as they impact democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

May 7 marked the second anniversary of the disappearance of Yuri Zakharenka, the former Belarusian Minister of Internal Affairs. In 1999, General Zakharenka, who had been critical of Belarusian leader Alexander Lukashenka and had attempted to form a union of officers to support democracy, was put in a car by unidentified men and taken away. He has not been heard from since. His fate is probably similar to other prominent Belarusian opposition figures who have disappeared over the last few years, notably Victor Hanchar, Antoloy Krasovsky and Dmitry Zavadsky. The Belarusian authorities have had no success in investigating these disappearances; indeed, there are indications that the regime of Alexander Lukashenka may have been involved. Opinion polls in Belarus have shown that a clear majority of those who are aware of the disappearances believe that they are the work of the Lukashenka regime.

These disappearances embody the climate of disregard for human rights and democracy that has persisted since the election of Mr. Lukashenka in 1994. That disregard has intensified following his unconstitutional power grab in November 1996.

Presidential elections are planned for later this year. Unfortunately, recent developments in Belarus do not inspire confidence that these elections will meet OSCE standards for free and democratic elections. Despite commitments made to the OSCE, Belarusian authorities continue to unlawfully restrict freedom of assembly and to beat and detain participants in peaceful demonstrations, as illustrated by the April 21 protest by youth activists. On April 27, Valery Shchukin, deputy of the disbanded Belarusian parliament, received a three month sentence for the dubious charge of "malicious hooliganism." And on May 7, police arrested opposition activists who marked the anniversary of Yuri Zakharenka's disappearance. The activists held placards reading: "Where is Zakharanka?"; "Who's Next?"; and "Where are the Disappeared People—Zakharanka, Hanchar, Krasousky, Zavadsky?"

Lukashenka continues his harsh assault on OSCE's efforts to develop democracy, characterizing domestic elections observers supported by the OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group (AMG) as "an army of bandits and collaborationists." This is only the last in a series of incredible accusations against the international community, includ-

ing far-fetched allegations that \$500 million had been earmarked in support of the opposition candidates. On April 25, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Friemut Duvé canceled his visit to Belarus to protest the denial of a visa to his senior advisor, a U.S. diplomat Diana Moxhay who had earlier served at the U.S. Embassy in Minsk. The visit was to have examined the difficult media environment in Belarus, especially in light of the forthcoming presidential elections.

I continue to have grave concerns that Presidential Directive No. 8, which imposes restrictions on assistance from abroad offered to NGOs for democracy building and human rights including election monitoring, could be used to block NGO activities and important OSCE AMGroup projects in Belarus.

These and numerous other recent occurrences call into question the Belarusian government's willingness to comply with freely undertaken OSCE commitments and raise doubts as to whether the Lukashenka regime intends to conduct the upcoming elections in a manner consistent with international standards.

As Chairman of the Helsinki Commission, I call upon the Belarusian authorities to conduct a real and public investigation of the disappearances. Furthermore, I urge the Belarusian Government to take the steps necessary in order for the presidential elections to be recognized as free and democratic as outlined by the March 7 Final Statement of the Parliamentary Troika. These are: transparency and democracy in the preparation and implementation of the elections, in particular the process of registration of the candidates, the composition of electoral commissions and counting of votes; equal access for all candidates to the mass media; refraining from harassment of candidates, their families and supporters; and freedom in carrying out their work for all those engaged in domestic election observation.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2001

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about hate crimes legislation I introduced with Senator KENNEDY last month. The Local Law Enforcement Act of 2001 would add new categories to current hate crimes legislation sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society.

I would like to detail a heinous crime that occurred September 22, 2000 in Roanoke, VA. Ronald Edward Gay, 53, allegedly walked into the Backstreet Café and opened fire on patrons, killing one person and wounding six others. Gay told police that he shot seven people in a gay bar because he was angry about jokes people made about his last name. Gay has been charged with first-degree murder in the death of Danny Lee Overstreet. Police have said that Gay admits shooting people "to get rid

of, in his term, 'faggots,' saying that Gay was upset over the fact that people made fun of his last name."

I believe that government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act of 2001 is now a symbol that can become substance. I believe by passing this legislation we can change hearts and minds as well.

SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC POWER

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, on April 24, 2001, I voted to report S. 206, legislation which would repeal the Public Utility Holding Company Act, out of the Senate Banking Committee. I did so with strong reservations. I have been one of the strongest supporters of public power during my service in Congress. Public power has been extremely beneficial for my State. Without the initiative and determination of the municipal utilities and the rural co-operatives in the early part of this century, South Dakota and the neighboring states would not have received electricity as soon as they did. Since then, these entities have provided South Dakota with reliable electricity and energy services.

In addition, I have had a long record of support for public power. This includes authoring an amendment during committee consideration in the House of Representatives that helped stop the sale of the public power administrations that House Republicans attempted to sell in 1995. Moreover, I have worked closely with the rural electric coops, municipal owned utilities and rural telephone coops on a number of issues. Recently, I was graciously given an award from the South Dakota Rural Electric Cooperatives and the Congressional Leadership Award from the National Telephone Cooperative Association in recognition of the work we have done together.

I have concerns about S. 206 and am not committed to voting for it on the floor. I believe that more needs to be done to ensure that sustainable, competitive markets are in place that will keep prices affordable and that will discourage undue concentration. I pledge to work with all parties on this effort so that any legislation that is considered will be fair to public power and its concerns.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE RUSSIAN JEWISH CONGRESS

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. President, I rise today to congratulate the Russian Jewish Congress for laying the cornerstone of the Archipova street Community Center near the Moscow Choral synagogue. I think it is also important to thank the Chief Rabbi of Moscow, Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, the spiritual guide of the Russian Jewish Congress, for the restoration of the Choral Synagogue dome which was destroyed under an anti-Semitic decree

of the pre-revolutionary Moscow government.

The Russian Jewish Congress was established in January 1996. In the years since then it has been a stalwart combatant of racism and anti-Semitism in Russia establishing 50 branch offices throughout the Federation. In 1998 the Congress completed the Holocaust Memorial Complex on Poklonnaya Gora in Moscow, the first Holocaust museum in Russia. In addition the Russian Jewish Congress arranged for the restitution of funds disbursed to Holocaust survivors in Russia to be tax exempt.

Finally, I would like to note the work of Mr. Yuri Luzhkov, Mayor of Moscow, for his initiative to restore the Choral Synagogue and the surrounding area, including erecting a replica of Jerusalem's Wailing Wall, symbolizing the suffering of the past as well as the hope for the future of Russian Jewry. I congratulate all of you for your dedication and hard work on behalf of the Jewish Community in Russia.

WAGRO ANNUAL TRIBUTE TO THE MARTYRS OF THE WARSAW GHETTO

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, on April 22, 2001 I delivered a statement before the Warsaw Ghetto Resistance Organization's, WAGRO, Annual Tribute to the Martyrs of the Warsaw Ghetto, at Temple Emanuel in New York City. I ask unanimous consent that my remarks be printed in the RECORD along with the statement delivered on the same day by Mr. Benjamin Mead, President of the Warsaw Ghetto Resistance Organization, WAGRO.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

Mrs. CLINTON. Good afternoon.

It's an honor for me to be here as your Senator, but more than that, as a fellow human being who is called upon to remember. I am also pleased to be here with the Governor, the Mayor, and my friend and partner, Senator Schumer.

I would only add to the strong words that Senator Schumer has just expressed, for most of us, if not all of us. That in addition to the Jewish people and the people of Israel, protecting themselves, the government and the people of the United States must stand with the government and people of Israel in that endeavor. And we will reassert as strongly as possible the need for our government to do that in every way necessary.

What brings us here today as we commemorate the six million Jewish martyrs and the 58th Anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, is not to relive the pain for those of us who can't possibly imagine. But to honor and respect the survivors and to join together in pledging that the sacrifice and the spirit was never extinguished, never given in vain.

I remember being in Warsaw with Ben and Vladka and looking at some of the same places that he referred to, that he saw with horror as a young man, as the Warsaw Ghetto was burned. And as we remember Warsaw and as we do again today in New York. Those young people, primarily young people, who struggled, who understood the central mission of their fight: to live with honor.

And what a struggle and what fighters and what an army they were. The Warsaw Ghetto fighters constituted an army of hope. These young soldiers, who smuggled arms, created bunkers, established a system of intelligence and organized their community, they transformed a ghetto, which the Nazis had established as a mere way station to the death camps, into a battlefield.

The Warsaw Ghetto fighters turned their vulnerability and disadvantage, into an esprit de corps that shocked their enemy. Let us not forget, it took the Nazi troops longer to put down the ghetto revolt than it took to conquer all of Poland.

When I read about or think back or when Ben or Vladka or others tell me of the first hand experience of what those days were like, I imagine the months of organizing and smuggling and hiding, that made that uprising possible. I imagine as though it were a ray of light penetrating the walls of the ghetto. The constant renaissance of spirit and courage that took place under the worst of all possible conditions.

And I especially felt that, Vladka, after reading your poignant account of the resistance. I commend that to you, as I do the real life experiences and remembrances that we should be passing on and teaching to our children.

Vladka describes the feeling of standing on the brink of an abyss. She conveys the sense of despair that pervades the emptied, ravaged ghetto. She recalls that, "All roads in the ghetto seemed to lead to Treblinka; there was no escape."

And yet at the moment when all seemed lost, something changes. And she tells the story of the resistance and describes the hidden hope and the gathering storm of courage brewing beneath the ruins. She eloquently writes, "A spark had been smoldering . . . in the ghetto. Now it began to glow, slowly, tentatively at first, then ever more fiercely."

As I watched the women climb the steps to light the candles, I thought about that flame. I thought about the flame of determination and yes, even triumph. That flame that today stands as the greatest rebuke, not only to the Nazis, but anti-Semites and evildoers everywhere. That flame did keep hope and courage alive and with it, the will to live.

One of my favorite biblical passages comes from the book of Deuteronomy. God has gathered his people together to explain their obligations to him and to each other. And He tells them, "Before you I have placed life and death, the blessing and the curse. You must choose life, so that you and your descendants will survive." Even in the darkest hours of the Holocaust, in the death camps and certainly, in the Warsaw Ghetto that is the choice the martyrs, heroes and survivors made. They chose life.

And we today, in some small and totally inadequate way, not only remember them, but come to thank them for reminding us that we must always choose life as well.

Thank you and God bless you.

FROM REMEMBRANCE MUST COME TRUTH AND UNDERSTANDING

Mr. MEAD: This week, as Jews come together to remember, from Jerusalem to Buenos Aires from New York to London, Paris, Toronto, we find ourselves asking the same painful and unanswered questions which have tormented us for the past years: How could the nearly total destruction of European Jewry have happened? How could the world have stood by silently?

Why were we left so alone and abandoned? Language does not exist to describe what our people endured in those years. We tremble to think what could happen if we allow a

new generation to arise, ignorant of the tragedy which is still shaping the future.

The dread we have carried in ourselves from the Holocaust has just been aroused again with the publication of shocking details about the atrocious murder of the 1600 Jews in Jedwabne, Poland.

On a single day in July, 1941, a German mobile killing unit had arrived to "cleanse" the town of the Jews who made up half of its population. But their "Neighbors" decided to take the genocide into their own hands. They went on a murderous rampage, killing Jews in the streets. Then they rounded up a thousand more Jews and burned them alive in a barn. Of the town's Jewish population, only seven people survived who were in hiding.

The people who murdered those Jews were not strangers. They were not members of an elite political party committed to racial genocide. Nor were they soldiers taking orders. They were their neighbors.

We have good reason to fear that there are many more Jedwabne's which have yet to come to light. We are here to remember each community of Jews, which was destroyed.

We must also remember that there were righteous gentiles among the Polish population, and throughout Europe, who risked and even sacrificed their lives to protect Jews. I would not be here myself if it had not been for some of those courageous and heroic people. But how few they were.

The realization that so many participated and collaborated with our enemy in the nearly total destruction of European Jewry reminds us that the impossible is possible—that the unthinkable can happen. So many stood silently by and watched as the horrors took place before their eyes, so many blinded themselves from recognizing the barbarity of what they saw, and were deaf to our cries for help.

Fifty-eight years ago, during the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, I stood in Krasinski Square outside a Catholic church which faced the ghetto wall, a young Jewish boy posing as a gentile. The air throbbed with the blasts of German artillery bombardment. A carousel turned, music blared, and children and their parents rode as I watched the horrifying sight of the ghetto burning. Its houses were in flames, and its remaining inhabitants jumping out of windows. I could not believe that the people around me actually rejoiced and reveled, declaring, "the Jews are frying!"

It is not for us to grant forgiveness for the crimes of the Holocaust. That can come only from the victims. We cannot forget the Nazis Germans who ordered the "Final Solution." Nor can we forget either the "willing executioners" who participated in the systematic genocide, or the by-standers.

We are learning and documenting how hatred and greed motivated and aided in the destruction of our people. Germany and individuals throughout Europe profited by using Jewish slave labor for military purposes, and for the production of consumer goods for their home front as well.

Last Thursday, the State of Israel observed Yom Ha Shoah—everything came to a standstill. Today we stand in resolute solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Israel, where a large community of Holocaust survivors resides, where Arab violence must come to an end, and where both Jews and Arabs must forge a common peaceful destiny. After the Holocaust, we survivors chose life, not hatred; we chose to struggle for understanding rather than to take revenge. We continue to build new families, new generations. We must do all that is possible to ensure that those who follow us will not face evil, ruthless destruction, as was visited upon us. Thus, we remember the past for the sake of our future.