



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Aggressive Nationalism

As prepared for delivery by Ambassador Larry Napper, Head of the U.S. Delegation
Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
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Aggressive nationalism and chauvinism were once dominant issues in OSCE discussions. What we learned from countering the aggressive nationalism of the Yugoslav conflicts in the 1990s has been instrumental in reshaping this organization, including our increased focus on field missions. We now know that the OSCE cannot wait to react to incidents of interethnic violence and ethnic cleansing, but rather, must respond immediately and decisively at the first signs of interethnic unrest. We are attacking the roots of inter-ethnic hatred by promoting tolerance education and field activities, such as human rights training for law enforcement officials. The OSCE is also using Permanent Council meetings to urge political leaders to respond swiftly and effectively to manifestations of intolerance.

Prevention of aggressive nationalism, chauvinism and ethnic cleansing is necessarily an ongoing process. The failure of local authorities in the Balkans to apprehend and deliver to The Hague those individuals indicted for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide is a cause for continuing concern. Indeed, there are more than 20 individuals publicly indicted by the Tribunal who still have not been apprehended. In Serbia, some indictees walk around freely; others are tipped off, and others like Mladic remain out of reach of half-hearted attempts to locate them. In Bosnia's Republika Srpska, most of the remaining fugitives are Bosnian Serbs, yet the Republika Srpska has never arrested an indictee. In Croatia, the government has failed to take any meaningful steps to arrest Ante Gotovina.

The United States welcomes the recent positive statements by Serbia and Montenegro Foreign Minister Draskovic, Serbian President Tadic and others regarding the need to cooperate with the Tribunal. The report on Srebrenica released in Republika Srpska similarly offered hope of positive action. The United States also welcomes the recent surrenders of several indictees from Croatia. As Secretary of State Colin Powell said in Sarajevo in late July, however, fulfilling obligations means not just saying the right words, but delivering results. The recent photo images of indictee Goran Hadzic leaving his home in Serbia to go into hiding show the continuing gap between word and deed. These cases also demonstrate that the current lack of cooperation is due not to logistical difficulties with locating and apprehending dangerous persons, but rather, to a lack of widespread political will.

It also needs to be made clear that the delivery of indictees is not an artificial issue intended to hinder European integration. Indeed, it is truly sad that ICTY cooperation is often presented to the Serbian people as a demand from the international community that must be met, rather than as the right thing to do and the best course of action for Serbia's own interests.

Officials in Belgrade and Banja Luka repeatedly warn of the domestic impact of new indictments and arrests. Unfortunately, nationalist political parties, such as the Radical Party in Serbia or the SDS in Republika Srpska, continue to use resistance to cooperation to

motivate their supporters. These parties have used false patriotism as a means to maintain a grip on the economic levers they control on behalf of the war criminals, who are the ultimate beneficiaries of their corruption. Such activities should have no place in any European society today.

The March violence in Kosovo is yet another example of the need for the OSCE to continue its work in the region to counteract extremist elements. Despite the progress made in Kosovo since 1999, much remains to be done in building a democratic, multi-ethnic society. As outlined by the Contact Group in their September 22 Interim Review Statement, Kosovo must become a place where all "regardless of ethnic background, race or religion, are free to live, work and travel without fear, hostility or danger, and where there is tolerance, justice and peace for everyone." To that end, the international community will continue to work with Kosovo to accelerate implementation of the "Standards for Kosovo," particularly those related to the protection of minorities.

Throughout the OSCE region - including in Russia, European countries "West of Vienna" and North America -- Muslims, people of color, Roma and Jews continue to encounter prejudice and societal discrimination. Mosques, synagogues and Muslim and Jewish cultural facilities are frequently vandalized. There is a need for governments to do more to prevent these despicable acts.

Certainly, the consolidation of democracy and integration into European structures based on respect for international human rights standards will help make extreme nationalism a less attractive ideology for young people in the formerly Communist countries of the OSCE region. Governments in "established democracies" must also be vigilant and take steps to prevent and punish violent acts of hate. Aggressive nationalism and ethnic strife are not unavoidable phenomena. But we must demonstrate vision and determination if we are to eliminate these threats to stability and security once and for all.

Thank you.