



## United States Mission to the OSCE

### CLOSING PLENARY

**Statement of Ambassador Pamela Hyde Smith  
U.S. Delegation to the OSCE Implementation Meeting  
October 17, 2003**

Over the past two weeks, we have participated in more than 100 hours of debate on topics relating to nearly every aspect of human rights. The conversations have taken place openly, among officials, international organizations, activists, journalists and private citizens, some of whom are starkly critical of the policies they see. This right to debate, to hold governments accountable and criticize without fear of reprisal is one of the hallmarks of free nations. The commitment of OSCE members to submit themselves to this kind of meeting is one of the reasons the organization has such credibility and endurance.

This conference had a number of noteworthy moments. We were disappointed to have no representatives present from Turkmenistan, particularly at this critical moment in that nation's development. Despite the absence of official Turkmen, we believe this meeting greatly benefited from the presence of Professor Decaux and Turkmen opposition parties. It was clear that there is widespread support for Mr. Decaux's fine report and follow-up recommendations. We strongly urge all participating States to turn those suggestions into concrete actions. The U.S. concurs with the preliminary OSCE ODIHR assessment of the October 15<sup>th</sup> presidential election in Azerbaijan. As in the past, we call on Azerbaijan's government to follow through on its OSCE commitments and fulfill its duties for the safety of its citizens and the safeguarding of their rights. We also call on the opposition parties to act peacefully and within the law.

The United States is gravely concerned about the ongoing reports and allegations of human rights abuses in Chechnya. When the constitutional referendum was held in March, the United States hoped that it and the October 5 elections could be useful steps toward a political settlement. Unfortunately, the political process that led up to the elections fell short of its potential for producing a positive, democratic outcome. Nevertheless, we continue to hope that the people of Chechnya and their leaders at all levels will find ways to end terrorism and human rights abuses, resolve the conflict, and establish the rule of law and democratic institutions. Finally, the United States also remains greatly concerned that two human rights activists from Kazakhstan, Amirzahan Kosanov and Ermurai Bapi, were not allowed to come to this meeting, despite repeated calls for them to attend.

I hope it was clear how important the United States believes the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting is. Assistant Secretary Craner, Congressmen Smith, Cardin, Pitts and Davis, Ambassador Minikes and I valued our conversations here. We were also heartened by the growing commitment to follow-up conferences on racism and xenophobia and on anti-Semitism. Yesterday's inflammatory and offensive comments by Malaysian Prime Minister Mahatir to the Organization of the Islamic Conference confirms that anti-Semitism continues to demand our urgent attention. We expect that these important OSCE conferences will not only highlight the problems but direct our efforts to mitigate intolerance. We would very much like to see the OSCE Ministerial endorse the German offer to host a follow-up OSCE conference in Berlin next year on anti-Semitism and a

separate follow-up conference in Berlin next year on anti-Semitism and a separate follow-up conference on Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, as well as the collection of anti-Semitism and hate-crime statistics.

We applaud the work already done for the Ministerial on the Action Plan to Combat Trafficking and are committed to developing an appropriate mechanism to help States translate these recommendations into action. We will, likewise, work with other OSCE participating States to develop the Roma/Sinti Action Plan for the Ministerial. We hope the Ministerial will also strengthen our commitments on religious freedom, address registration concerns and increase ODIHR monitoring of problems. Finally, we additionally would like the Ministerial to commit the OSCE to increasing its activities in the protection of the human rights of Internally Displaced Persons, specifically welcoming the UN Guiding Principles on IDPs.

The U.S. has also made a number of suggestions for topics for next year's Supplementary Human Dimension Meetings and ODIHR Seminar, including on the issue of IDPs, the Right to Peaceful Assembly, Freedom of Movement, and Access to Government Information.

Mr. Chairman, this meeting has again pointed to the need to implement our OSCE commitments, the visionary basis of the OSCE. Twenty-seven years ago the delegates in Helsinki hit upon a fundamental truth when they saw that idealism and pragmatism go hand in hand. For the first time they firmly linked our security to the promotion of what President Bush has called the "non-negotiable demands of human dignity." The record has shown that nations reduce conflict and flourish when they guarantee fundamental freedoms, rule of law and opportunity to all their peoples.

We know well that living up to our values is a difficult, ongoing process, both for individuals and collectively. In the United States, our own history has been a long struggle to act according to our ideals. We felt this anew during the past summer when we celebrated the fortieth anniversary of Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech. That speech still challenges us, because the great dream of Dr. King has not yet been fully realized, despite how far we have come since 1963.

It is no coincidence that what we have been experiencing in this room for the last two weeks is called the Helsinki "process." What we do here, and in Vienna, and in follow-up in our own capitals, is part of an essential continuum. The ball that was put in motion in 1975 must remain in motion with each generation in order for us to achieve success in the field of human rights.

Mr. Chairman, we benefit greatly from the opportunity to be here. We thank you and the staff at ODIHR for your leadership and organization of this meeting, and all others in the room for their insights. We look forward to continuing to participate in this valuable process.