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CSCE NEWS RELEASE

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

U.S. Congress • Washington, D.C. 20515
 Steny H. Hoyer, Chairman
 Dennis DeConcini, Co-Chairman

202/225-1001

AS AMERICA COMMEMORATES THE HOLOCAUST, HELSINKI COMMISSION CONVENES HEARING ON PROSPECTS FOR A WAR CRIMES TRIBUNAL FOR THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
 14 April 1993

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WASHINGTON -- As part of its on-going examination of the conflict in former Yugoslavia, the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (the Helsinki Commission) will convene a hearing on Wednesday, April 21, from 2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. in Room 608 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to consider practical questions relating to the prosecution of violations of international humanitarian law, including violations of the Genocide Convention, in the former Yugoslavia.

The hearing, to be chaired by Sen. Dennis DeConcini (D-Ariz.) and Rep. Steny H. Hoyer (D-Md.), Chairman and Co-chairman of the Helsinki Commission, will be held during the week-long commemoration of the Holocaust and dedication of the Holocaust Museum. Although the world has cried out "Never again," men, women, and children continue to be subjected to Europe's worst atrocities since World War II.

In addition, in light of the UN Secretary General's report on concrete proposals for a war crimes tribunal (scheduled to be released the end of that week), expert witnesses will consider the compelling moral imperative for holding individual perpetrators of war crimes, including rape and forced impregnation, personally accountable for their actions.

Witnesses will include:

Ambassador Morris B. Abram: Ambassador Abram served as a member of Justice Jackson's prosecution staff at the Nuremberg war crimes trials. Since then, his distinguished record of public involvement in human rights issues is unbroken. Among his accomplishments, he won a sixteen-year battle culminating in the 1963 Supreme Court decision binding into U.S. law the constitutional principle of "one person, one vote" and served as a family lawyer for Martin Luther King Jr. Most recently, Ambassador Abram served as the U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva.

The Honorable Geraldine Ferraro: A former Member of Congress and vice-presidential candidate, Ms. Ferraro was recently appointed by President Clinton to serve as a member of the U.S. delegation to the UN Human Rights Commission. At the Commission's February meeting, she spearheaded a U.S. effort to secure the adoption by the Human Rights Commission of a strongly worded resolution condemning the practice of mass rape in the Yugoslav conflict as a war crime.

Professor Thomas Buergenthal: Professor Buergenthal, a survivor of the Auschwitz concentration camp, is an expert in the field of international and comparative human rights law. During the past year, he has served on the three-member United Nations Truth Commission for El Salvador. He previously served as judge (1979-1991) and President (1985-1987) of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Professor Buergenthal is currently the Director of the International Rule of Law Center and International Legal Studies Program of the National Law Center at George Washington University.

The U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) is mandated by law to monitor and encourage progress in implementing the provisions of the CSCE Final Act, commonly known as the Helsinki accords. The Commission, created in 1976, is made up of nine Senators, nine Representatives and one official each from the Departments of State, Commerce and Defense.