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# AMERICANS FOR AMERICA

Citizens Conserving Our Constitution  
Senator John Andrews, Chairman

**OSCE HDIM 2017  
INTERVENTION FOR WORKING SESSION 6  
Submitted by John Andrews  
14 September 2017**

## **Voltaire's Legacy Betrayed**

My organization, a national civic education project, came to this all-European conference on human rights hoping to encounter the noble spirit of Voltaire, one of modern Europe's free-thinking founders, who famously proclaimed, "I disagree with what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it."

To our disappointment, in the sessions yesterday and today, as well as in the official Annotated Agenda, we find implicit or even explicit endorsement of the exact opposite.

On the part of more and more European governments, the message is: "I disagree with what you say, and I will jail you or fine you for daring to say it."

On the part of at least one global belief system, Islamic blasphemy and apostasy law, the message is more shocking still: "I disagree with what you say, and I will kill you for daring to say it."

This is no exaggeration. Ask the cartoonist in Denmark, or the filmmaker in Holland, or Pamela Geller in Texas, or the Charlie Hebdo jihad victims in Paris.

I refer the delegates to the Annotated Agenda for this very session, where two false equations are made which militate against clear thinking and effective action.

On page 13 at the end of the second paragraph, the agenda lumps together hate crimes and threats, on the one hand, with hate speech and insults on the other hand, as if all were part of the same pathology.

Insults? When did everyday name-calling and hurt feelings come to warrant the same concern as the wanton violence manifested in, say, the vehicular homicides by fanatics in London and Nice and Charlottesville?

The implication here is that lawmakers should criminalize thoughts, ideas, attitudes, and emotions in the name of human rights. That's not tolerance, it's a monstrous soul-destroying regime of tyranny such as Orwell predicted in *1984* and *Animal Farm*. Voltaire rolls in his grave.

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Another intellectually dishonest equation occurs in the third paragraph on page 13, which refers in identical terms to violence against Jews, violence against Christians, and violence against Muslims.

While it's true that all three manifestation are equally barbaric and unacceptable, there is one key difference that the agenda does not mention.

Two of those worldwide belief systems, Judaism and Christianity, teach *against* unprovoked bloodlust towards your neighbor. Whereas the third, Islam and Islam alone, theologically calls *for* such violence aimed at subjugating or exterminating followers of the other two.

OSCE cannot possibly achieve its worthy goal of protecting human rights – the most fundamental of which is the right to life itself, the right not to be murdered – if it turns a blind eye to this crucial distinction.

### Two Recommendations

Accordingly, Americans for America recommends that OSCE unflinchingly acknowledge this hard and bitter truth, calling on all its Muslim affiliates to both *denounce* religiously motivated violence and *renounce* the underlying religious texts mandating bloodshed.

And secondly, Americans for America recommends that OSCE align itself forthrightly and firmly against any legislation that would criminalize words, thoughts, and feelings under the color of so-called “hate speech” laws.

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