



United States Mission to the OSCE

OSCE Conference on Anti-Semitism Intervention for Closing Session

As delivered by Christopher H. Smith
Chairman, U.S. Commission for Security and Cooperation in Europe
Berlin, April 29, 2004

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

On behalf of the U.S. delegation, I want to thank ministers, ambassadors, NGO's and fellow delegates for gathering here in such impressive numbers. I particularly thank Foreign Minister Passy, the OSCE Chairman in Office, and Foreign Minister Fischer, as host of the conference, for their extraordinary efforts in making this week's proceedings such a success.

And, I want to thank Gert Weisskirchen for his exemplary leadership and dedication to ending the scourge of anti-Semitism.

Mr. Chairman, the OSCE has now distinguished itself as the leading international organization in the fight against anti-Semitism. We all recognize however that this is only the beginning, but it's an important beginning. We still have a long way to go.

I congratulate the participating States for adopting last week's "Decision on Combating anti-Semitism." The Permanent Council took exactly the right steps to begin the process of battling anti-Semitism in every OSCE participating State. We have set the tone. Let this now serve as an example for other nations of the world.

ODIHR, in partnership with participating States, NGOs and others, will now collect, maintain and disseminate reliable information on acts of anti-Semitism. We here around the table must also do our part. The United States recently provided to ODIHR its national data on hate crimes. I urge all states who have not already done so to submit their own information as soon as possible. I understand that ODIHR also made a similar request to the NGO community for data on anti-Semitism and other hate crimes. I am encouraged that ODIHR is casting the net as widely as possible in its search for reliable information.

However, ODIHR is only one way in which to follow up our work. We must find other means to better focus the OSCE on the fight against anti-Semitism. We also take note of the Spanish offer to host a conference next year in Cordoba.

Sixty years ago, when World War II ended, the world believed that the inhuman, unspeakable acts perpetrated against Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators were over. It is sobering to realize that, far from being abandoned, anti-Semitism today is increasing in many countries.

The anti-Semitism of today derives from the anti-Semitism of yesterday. It still includes many outrageous myths and hateful propaganda, which we must all do our part to challenge, unmask and rebut.

Mr. Chairman, all that Jews ask for is simple equality and respect - it is my deep and abiding hope that this will now come about. What we must avoid is applying a double standard, either to individuals or nations.

What, after all, do we have in common? Our humanity and our heritage. We all long to be loved, respected, and permitted as individuals to accomplish our goals of improving our daily lives without preventing others from doing the same. Repressing others through anti-Semitism, racism and bigotry greatly diminishes us. We are all the children of the same God, no matter how we address that God. Let us go forth and both proclaim and implement these goals with all the skill, courage, tenacity, and compassion we have to offer.