



## United States Mission to the OSCE

# On the Dangers of Holocaust Distortion and Denial

As delivered by U.S. Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues Ellen Germain  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
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My name is Ellen Germain, and as the U.S. Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues, one of the questions my office addresses is, “How can we best combat Holocaust distortion and denial?” It does seem incredible that 81 years since the United States and our allies won WWII and ended the Holocaust, people still distort and deny the facts of this genocide. We have mountains of evidence, extensive survivor testimonies, and eyewitness accounts from those who liberated the concentration and death camps. Yet, denial and distortion persist.

While outright Holocaust denial can be easy to identify, Holocaust distortion is often more subtle. Some distortion avoids painting the full picture of the Holocaust or leaves out context. For example, some will downplay the role of local collaborators and focus solely on Nazi Germany in order to reshape national narratives; others emphasize local collaboration and downplay the Nazis’ central responsibility in an effort to reshape past and current narratives. Other distortions include whitewashing or rehabilitating the reputations of those who participated in the crimes of the Holocaust.

It is also Holocaust distortion to deliberately ignore the Nazi regime’s desire to annihilate Jews and Jewish life as *the* central motivation from which all their brutality stemmed. The Nazi regime’s program against Jews – labeled the “Final Solution” – was a state-directed mass murder plan. Applying the Nazi label to today’s geopolitical disputes minimizes the Nazi’s central target and intent. When ‘Nazi’ becomes a catch-all term for any opponent, it distorts the reality of the unique, racial ideology that motivated the genocide of the Jewish people, which history now remembers as the Holocaust.

The United States stands firmly against Holocaust distortion, both subtle and blatant, and is committed to defending and acknowledging the accurate history of the Holocaust in Europe. Any attempt to rewrite the historical record is an insult to the victims of the Holocaust and their memory. President Trump and Secretary Rubio have been clear: there can be no compromise with evil, and there can be no compromising the truth.

At the December OSCE Ministerial Meeting, the United States called upon the OSCE to return to its core mandate of promoting regional peace and stability; the United States identified combating antisemitism as a top priority and opportunity at the OSCE. Combating antisemitism includes combating Holocaust distortion and denial. The United States calls on all OSCE participating States that have not yet done so to adopt the IHRA’s Working Definition of Antisemitism, inclusive of its examples, and to use the IHRA’s Working Definition of Holocaust Denial and Distortion. As Holocaust distortion and denial, and pernicious forms of antisemitism, surge globally, States must act decisively to safeguard Jewish communities. “Never Again” requires our vigilance and action.

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