

**Remarks by The Secretary of State  
Colin L. Powell  
as delivered at  
The Conference on Anti-Semitism  
of  
The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe  
Berlin, April 28, 2004**

Thank you very much Mr. Moderator, Chairman Passy, Minister Fischer, Fellow Ministers and Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a great pleasure for me to be here representing President Bush and the people of the United States.

Chairman Passy, let me thank you for your leadership in planning and organizing this important conference on anti-Semitism. And I also wish to extend my sincere appreciation to the German Government and to my good friend Joschka Fischer for hosting our gathering and for taking a strong stand against this age-old yet active and evolving form of intolerance. And let me take this occasion to honor President Rau, not just for opening the conference, but also for his leadership against anti-Semitism and on so many other compelling moral issues during his 52 years of distinguished public service to Germany and to the world.

Berlin is a fitting backdrop for our meeting. The firestorm of anti-Semitic hatred that was the Holocaust was set here in Berlin. The Holocaust was no ordinary conflagration, but a colossal act of arson, unprecedented in scale with the annihilation of a people as its purpose. Six million Jews and millions of other men, women and children perished in the flames of fascism. European civilization as we thought we knew it was rent asunder.

Yet, it was also here in Berlin that a new, democratic Germany rose from the ashes of the Second World War. And in this city, a new Europe, whole and free, was born after the fall of that other great tyranny of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, communism.

Now, in the opening decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we, 55 democratic nations of Europe, Eurasia and America, have come to Berlin to stamp out the new fires of anti-Semitism within our societies, and to kindle lights of tolerance so that future generations will never know the unspeakable horrors that hatred can unleash.

When President Bush visited the Auschwitz death camp last year he renewed the United States' commitment to oppose anti-Semitism with these words: "This site is a sobering reminder that when we find anti-Semitism, whether it be in Europe, in America or anywhere else, mankind must come together to fight such dark impulses."

Today, we confront the ugly reality that anti-Semitism is not just a fact of history, but a current event.

At a planning session for this conference, Benjamin Meed, the President of the American Gathering of Holocaust Survivors, said that “Sixty years after the Holocaust I never thought that I would be invited to a meeting on anti-Semitism in Europe.” Indeed.

We are appalled that in recent years the incidence of anti-Semitic hate crimes has been on the increase within our community of democratic nations. All of us recognize that we must take decisive measures to reverse this disturbing trend.

Our states must work together with non-governmental organizations, religious leaders and other respected figures within our societies to combat anti-Semitism by word and deed. We need to work in close partnership to create a culture of social tolerance and civic courage, in which anti-Semitism and other forms of racial and religious hatred are met with the active resistance of our citizens, authorities and political leaders.

We must send the clear message far and wide that anti-Semitism is always wrong and it is always dangerous.

We must send the clear message that anti-Semitic hate crimes are exactly that: crimes, and that these crimes will be aggressively prosecuted.

We must not permit anti-Semitic crimes to be shrugged off as inevitable side effects of inter-ethnic conflicts. Political disagreements do not justify physical assaults against Jews in our streets, the destruction of Jewish schools, or the desecration of synagogues and cemeteries. There is no justification for anti-Semitism.

It is not anti-Semitic to criticize the state of Israel. But the line is crossed when Israel or its leaders are demonized or vilified, for example by the use of Nazi symbols and racist caricatures.

We must send the clear message to extremists of the political right and the political left alike that all those who use hate as a rallying cry dishonor themselves and dishonor their cause in the process.

Regrettably, my country has its share of anti-Semites and skinheads and other assorted racists, and bigots and extremists, who feed on fear and ignorance and prey on the vulnerable.

As a nation of many united as one, we are determined to speak out and take action at home and abroad against anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance and to promote the rights of persons belonging to minorities. As President Bush has said: “America stands for the non-negotiable demands of human dignity.”

Fortunately, the overwhelming majority of Americans are repelled by these hate-mongers and reject their vicious ways, their vicious views, their vicious attitudes. Overwhelmingly, the American people embrace diversity as a national asset and

tolerance is embraced as a civic virtue. Our laws and our leaders reflect those enlightened sentiments.

Not only do we believe that combating hatred is the right thing to do, we think that promoting tolerance is essential to building a democratic, prosperous and peaceful world. Hatred is a destroyer, not a builder. People consumed by hate cannot construct a better future for themselves or for their children.

So much of the misery and instability around the world today is caused or exacerbated by ethnic and religious intolerance, whether it's central Africa or the Middle East, Northern Ireland or Cyprus, Kosovo or Darfur. The distance from prejudice to violence, intolerance to atrocity, can be perilously short. The lessons of the Holocaust are timeless and urgent. In this new century, it is more important than ever for our leaders and citizens to counter anti-Semitism and other forms of hatred whenever they meet them.

It is especially important that we instill in our children values and behaviors that can avert new calamities. The sixteen-nation Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research has done a great deal already to increase understanding among young people of the Holocaust and its enduring lessons. And we welcome the growing interest on the part of other countries to join the Task Force.

Tolerance, like hatred, is a learned behavior passed from one generation to the next, unless the new generation is educated differently. Let tolerance be our legacy. May future generations of schoolchildren read that in the early decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, humankind finally consigned anti-Semitism to history, never to darken the world again.

The United States delegation, led by former New York City Mayor Ed Koch, is here to listen, to learn and to share best practices against anti-Semitism. We will have the benefit of Mayor Koch's direct experience dealing with hate crimes in the world's most ethnically diverse metropolis –and my hometown - New York City. Our delegation also draws expertise from Members of our Congress and from close partnership with non-governmental leaders doing pioneering work in the tolerance field.

The exchange of insights and ideas among our delegations here in Berlin should form a solid basis for practical action by each of our nations. There is much yet that we can do in the key areas of law enforcement, legislation and education to follow up on the decisions we took last December in Maastricht.

That's why I'm pleased that last week the Permanent Council of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe committed all of our 55 states to take further concrete actions against anti-Semitism. The OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in Warsaw will play a central role. This office now has a clear mandate to work with member states to collect hate crimes statistics, to

track anti-Semitic incidents and to report publicly on these matters. The office will also help states develop national legislation against hate crimes and promote tolerance through education. And I know that, in the course of your deliberations here, other ideas will arise as to how we can put action behind our words and whether we have institutionalized these actions in the proper way.

So my friends, here in Berlin, the 55 democratic nations of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe have come together and will stand together and declare with one voice: "Anti-Semitism shall have no place among us. Hate shall find no home within a Europe whole, free and at peace."

Thank you.