



## United States Mission to the OSCE

# Statement on Fighting Anti-Semitism and Other Forms of Discrimination, and Promoting Tolerance

As delivered by New York Governor George E. Pataki  
to the Cordoba Conference on Anti-Semitism  
and on Other Forms of Intolerance  
June 8, 2005

It is a great privilege to participate, with so many distinguished representatives of the world community, in this highly worthwhile discourse on ridding our world of anti-Semitism and intolerance.

Me gustaría agradecer al Presidente Zapatero, Ministro Moratinos, la ciudad de Córdoba y la gente de España por su ayuda con esta conferencia tan importante y por la hospitalidad que nos han ofrecido.

[I would like to thank President Zapatero, Minister Moratinos, the City of Cordoba and the people of Spain for hosting this important conference and for the wonderful hospitality they have so graciously extended to us.]

And thank you Minister Rupel, for your hard work and great leadership of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

I am deeply honored that President Bush and Secretary Rice have chosen me to lead such a distinguished group of US delegates at these important and historic proceedings.

I share President Bush's strong commitment to battling intolerance, oppression and hate wherever they occur, and I bring you his very personal best wishes and full support for the work we will accomplish here in Cordoba.

The United States of America is a nation of immigrants; and as such we Americans are the most diverse people in the world.

For the past 10 years, I have been privileged to lead the state that is the foremost example and symbol of America's diversity -- home to not only the US's largest Jewish population, but home to the most culturally diverse population anywhere.

In mosques, churches, temples and synagogues, New Yorkers freely practice all of the world's major religions -- they trace their ancestry to every corner of the Earth, their faces bear every tone of the human palette.

For us, tolerance and respect for each of the components of our culture are not just an ideal -- they are a necessity; an inherent part of our daily way of life.

But our history is not free of intolerance and discrimination; indeed, like all nations, we have made mistakes and learned hard lessons we must never forget.

As a nation, we continue to contend with and work to rectify the injustices of slavery, racial and religious bigotry and ethnic persecution that stain our history.

And to that nation's great credit, Germany has done much to help heal the devastating wounds inflicted on the Jewish people during the Holocaust.

The Holocaust was truly one of the darkest chapters of human history, yet amazingly, instances of anti-Semitism are once again on the rise and we need to act now to halt this disturbing and alarming trend.

If the Holocaust taught us one lesson, it is the devastating price of silence and inaction when evil men fan the flames of hatred to achieve their own depraved ends.

Six million Jews were slaughtered before the Third Reich was finally toppled.

Who knows how many could have been saved had our nations' collective eyes been opened earlier to Hitler's maniacal genocide?

When left unchecked, ethnic and religious hatred become the fuels that fires mankind's most unspeakable evils – a point my fellow New Yorkers witnessed first hand – as did I - on September 11, 2001.

So for me, the quest toward mutual acceptance and respect among the peoples of the world and the struggle against merchants of hate are a personal, as well as a professional, pursuit.

And while all forms of racial and ethnic intolerance and hate are immoral and wrong, I submit to you that anti-Semitism must be specifically targeted because of its unique and tragic history, and particularly because of the inexplicable resurgence in the past few years.

The noted historian Paul Johnson recently called anti-Semitism “an intellectual disease, a disease of the mind, extremely infectious and massively destructive. A disease to which both human individuals and entire human societies are prone.”

Despots, dictators and tyrants throughout history have promoted hatred of Jews to further their own ambitions, and Hitler was no exception.

And while some may be tempted to regard the blatant anti-Semitism of the Holocaust as the stuff of mere history, it is simply not so.

Consider that the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, a century-old fabrication of Jews' supposed plan for world domination, a work read and believed by Hitler himself, continues to be distributed, quoted and taken as fact in many parts of the world.

Despite the fact that The Protocols were exposed as a fake in the early 1920's, neo-Nazis, skinheads and radical Islamic Jihadists continue to this day to wield this counterfeit history as a weapon against the Jewish people.

The most powerful weapon we have against hate is truth – we must not allow the disease of anti-Semitism to infect another generation.

Outside the purview and supervision of our nations' respective public school systems, there are a growing number of parallel schools run by radical Islamic Jihadists that are not only preaching anti-Semitism, but actually encouraging violence against Jews.

Sadly, this disturbing, all-too-familiar movement is occurring in many nations of the OSCE, including the United States.

We must be vigilant – we must protect our children from the fallacious and toxic anti-Semitic fiction, and instead allow them to hear and learn from the horrific first-hand accounts of the tens of thousands of Holocaust survivors who still are with us in Europe and America today.

Anti-Semitism isn't just a crime against Jews, it is a threat to all freedom-loving nations and all civilized peoples of world.

It is clear that together we must enforce a policy of “zero tolerance” for anti-Semitism and other forms of bigotry around the world.

In New York we have accomplished this with a three-pronged approach – promoting awareness, appreciation and respect between our many cultural communities, enacting tough laws and policies to combat acts of discrimination and hate, and enforcing those laws and policies aggressively and constantly.

In 2000, I was proud to sign the historic Hate Crimes Law into law in New York State – a measure that imposes even more severe penalties for crimes that are motivated by hatred against people of a particular ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation.

This historic law has not only ensured swift, severe and just punishment for perpetrators of hate crimes in New York State; it has sent a clear message that the people of New York are unified in our opposition to acts of intolerance and hatred.

In addition, New York State is proud to be in the forefront of training our state police, local police, corrections officers, and prosecutors in tolerance and dealing with bias-motivated crimes.

It is extremely heartening to see so many nations of the world taking a tough stand on Anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance.

But there is much more to be done.

We must define, discover, quantify, study and eradicate anti-Semitism, and all forms of ethnic and religious intolerance and violence whenever and wherever they are discovered.

Fighting hate is a responsibility borne by the governments of all civilized nations – moreover, it is a moral obligation borne by all members of the human race.

I extend my sincere thanks to all OSCE participating States for their commitment and resolve as we collaborate in united pursuit of this solemn duty. Thank you.