

Congressional Testimony of Ronald Lauder
President
World Jewish Congress
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Mr. Chairman, my name is Ronald Lauder.

I live in New York City and I am the President of the World Jewish Congress, the international organization that represents Jewish communities in 100 countries around the world.

Before I begin, I would like to personally thank you for your many years of support to the Jewish community as well as your support for people of all religions, races, genders and age who live in our great country.

This particular topic, at this particular moment in history, ***After Paris and Copenhagen, Responding to the Rising Tide Of Anti-Semitism*** is, sadly, all too timely ... and it is reminiscent of an even darker time that we thought was behind us.

With your permission, I would like to submit my opening statement for the record.

Statement:

Exactly 70 years ago, as American G.I.s advanced into Nazi-Germany in the last days of the most devastating war in history, the world saw its first glimpse of the horror of unbridled anti-Semitism.

The images of the concentration camps that were liberated throughout Europe in the spring of 1945 still cause a universal shudder to this day.

For the first few decades following World War II, we mistakenly believed that anti-Semitism – the age-old hatred of Jews – had finally disappeared from Europe and everywhere else.

That is because in the 1950s and 1960s, no one in their right minds wanted to be associated with Nazis.

It is because we all saw where this kind of hatred leads.

And, perhaps, people who still harbored these beliefs were too embarrassed to express them openly.

I now tell you with the greatest sadness that 70 years later, the age-old virus of anti-Semitism has returned in all its evil and ugliness.

Anti-Semitism has returned to streets of Paris and Toulouse ... to the streets of

Brussels and Copenhagen ... it has even returned to Berlin.

(You will hear the personal accounts from my friend, Roger Cukierman, the head of the Jewish community in Paris, but listen to these frightening facts.)

Jews make up less than one percent of the population of France but they were victims of more than half of all the racist attacks in that country last year.

The number of anti-Jewish attacks in France in 2014 doubled from the year before.

In Great Britain, the number of anti-Semitic attacks doubled from the year before.

In Austria, anti-Semitic attacks doubled from the year before.

In fact, an EU report from nine nations showed that 16 months ago – long before the latest wave of terror – Jews in these countries were already concerned about growing anti-Semitism.

You don't have to be a mathematician to see an obvious trend here.

There is a hatred growing throughout Europe that is causing Jews to wonder if they should leave ... they are asking if there is a future for Jews on that continent.

Last fall, I sat with representatives of the Jewish community in Rome and they told me that although they may stay ... their children and definitely their grandchildren will leave. They told me that the Jewish community in Rome, that has existed since the time of Christ and survived Hitler, would disappear within 25 years.

How could this happen in 2015?

The answer is that a strange confluence of hatred has taken hold across Europe today that comes from very different corners.

There are huge populations of Muslim immigrants throughout Europe. Most are peaceful, but far too many of them have adopted radical Islam.

There are thousands of young European Muslims that have left to fight with Islamic radicals in Iraq and Syria, and there is a real fear that they could return, bringing the bloodshed with them.

Some have already returned and we have seen the consequences.

At the same time, we have seen the rise of smaller right wing Neo-Nazi extremist

groups that have become political forces in Hungary and Greece and have been seen on the streets in Germany and France.

And there is a third force that may appear more benign, but it adds fuel to this fire. I'm talking about an educated, elitist class – from universities to the media – that has a pathological hatred of Israel.

They would never consider themselves anti-Semitic but they are quite open in their opinion that only Israel is the source of all of the problems in the Middle East.

This is intellectually dishonest and devoid of reality. But too many people have accepted their lies as the truth.

And then there is technology.

70 years ago, Josef Goebbels used newspapers, film and marches to infuse hatred of Jews into mainstream society.

Today, the power of the internet sends out a constant stream of anti-Jewish ideas at hyperspeed .. and there are not enough people speaking up to counter these lies.

Do you want to know what it's like to be openly Jewish in Europe today?

Just go to YouTube and watch what happens when a young man simply walks down a European street wearing a yarmulke.

He is insulted ... shoved ... spat on ... and as we saw in France ... Jews who are openly Jewish can also be killed.

Once again, like the 1930s, European Jews live in fear.

Members of the Committee ...

In my travels to all of these communities, I am asked the same question around Europe and the world:

Where is the United States?

Why isn't the United States leading the world in this crisis?

Right after the attacks on Charlie Hebdo and the Kosher grocery store in Paris ... over 1-million people marched in defiance of those murders.

Many of the leaders in Europe linked arms in solidarity in the very front row ...

but there was not one U.S. representative with them in the front row.

I believe that sent a very negative message around the world.

European leaders have stepped up and strongly condemned these attacks on Jews and the rise of anti-Semitism.

The United States must do the same.

The United States must lead.

When a Neo-Nazi party like Jobik in Hungary or Golden Dawn in Greece wins substantial seats in elections ... the United States must condemn this in the strongest possible terms.

My fear is that muted condemnations or, worse, silence, could lead to what we saw in Europe 70 years ago ... and that led to deaths of 60 million people and the destruction of a continent.

We must insist that European nations better share intelligence on anti-Semitic Islamic hate preachers ... all countries must better monitor radical Islamic recruiting in prisons, on the internet and in mosques ... and without question, we must closely monitor European and U.S. nationals returning from the Middle East and Africa.

The United States can and must speak loudly and clearly to condemn this evil for what it is – the radical Islamic hatred of Jews.

Mr. Chairman, one of the bravest men in history, Sir Winston Churchill, came to Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri in 1946 and warned us that the Soviet takeover of Eastern Europe was complete and an Iron Curtain had descended across the continent.

Churchill was trying to wake up a sleeping world because too many people didn't want to believe him.

We had just fought a war against totalitarianism and we were tired ... we didn't want to fight another one.

Well, today, it's not an Iron Curtain that is descending across Eastern Europe ... it is a white-hot fire and its reach is much greater.

This new, incandescent flame is scorching the entire Middle East from Tehran across Iraq and through Syria, Lebanon, Gaza and now Yemen.

It stretches across parts of Northern Africa.

It destroys everything in its path and leaves nothing alive ... not Jews, not Christians and not Muslims who don't share their exact beliefs.

Unless we act right now, the flame of radical Islam could stretch across all of Europe as well.

After Churchill's speech in Missouri, it took 44 years and billions of dollars to defeat Soviet Communism.

We were focused back then, we were committed, we were united with our allies and we were able to win the Cold War without horrific bloodshed.

But in order to defeat this new flame of radical Islamic terror and survive ... the United States must lead.

I fear that if we do not stand up to this new foe immediately, it will take us much longer than 44 years to defeat it.

I fear it will cost us much more of our treasure and, most tragically of all, I fear it will consume many, many more lives – not just in the Middle East and Europe ... but here as well.

Members of the Committee, we must NOT let this happen again.

Thank you.