

TESTIMONY of MARK WEITZMAN
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Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights and International Organizations
Hearing on “Anti-Semitism Across Borders”

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I want to begin by thanking the Committee, especially Chairman Royce and Ranking Member Engel and Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Bass of the Subcommittee for once again taking the lead in examining the threat currently posed by growing and different manifestations of antisemitism. I am testifying here in my capacity as Director of Government Affairs for the Simon Wiesenthal Center. I am also the Co-Chair of the Committee on Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance as well as a board member of the Association of Holocaust Organizations, an international umbrella organization of over three hundred organizations and individuals for the advancement of Holocaust education, remembrance and research whose members have also expressed deep concern on these issues.

On June 16, 2004 while waiting for my turn to testify at earlier hearing on antisemitism, held by the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, I heard Natan Sharansky, the famous human rights activist and Israeli leader, describing what was then called the “new antisemitism.” As Sharansky defined it “Whereas classical anti-Semitism is aimed at the Jewish people or the Jewish religion, the new antisemitism is aimed at the Jewish State.” And, to illustrate the forms this new antisemitism was taking, Sharansky then described the now famous 3 D’s of “Double Standards, Demonization and Deligitimization”.

Sharansky’s formulation built on the insights and experiences of others, such as the late scholar of antisemitism Robert Wistrich who in 1984 identified a “new antisemitic anti-Zionism” in which he described extreme anti-Zionism as the new and only acceptable form which antisemitism could take in a post-Holocaust world. As Wistrich put it “in the post-war Western democracies anti-Zionism has provided a vehicle for the re-emergence of anti-Jewish attitudes which were for some twenty to twenty-five years partially submerged.”

These anti-Zionist expressions are not just verbal; frequently inspired by the stream of propaganda that radical Islamists put out online and the financial and political contributions to this campaign that come from some Muslim states and organizations, an increasing number of terrorist have translated words into action and assaulted and murdered Jews throughout Europe and targeted Jewish institutions in Europe and the US. Hatred has moved out from behind the cloak of anti-Zionism and is now nakedly visible as hatred of Jews as an entire generation has been exposed to the most viciously antisemitic propaganda. Having made antisemitism and Holocaust denial core elements of their policy, the repressive regime of Iran stands out as a major source of this propaganda, along with the terrorists of ISIS and Al-Qaeda.

However I think recent events have forced upon us the realization that while much of antisemitism, especially violent and murderous antisemitism, today is indeed filtered through anti-Zionism, a disturbing trend has emerged in which a new form of classical antisemitism itself has reentered the main institutions of civil society in certain areas.

This regeneration of traditional antisemitism is all the more dangerous because, unlike the violent extremists of both left, right and radical Islam, it is now found in government circles and halls of power in countries that we define as Western democracies.

In many ways it is also connected with attempts to distort the history of the Holocaust by whitewashing local collaborators or minimizing or even removing the Jewish identity of the victims. Often this is connected to a political agenda that is concerned with creating a traditionalist national narrative that wants to look back to an idealized past for heroes and models. And since many of these societies have emerged from both Nazi and Communist occupation and oppression, the past that they glorify is frequently the last period of home rule before World War II, and the ideals that they glorify can include versions of the traditional antisemitism that was prevalent before the war.

Perhaps in no country today is the situation more acute than in Poland. There we find senior government officials, such as Minister of Defense Antoni Macierewicz claiming in 2002 that he had read the infamous *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and that “Experience shows that there are such groups in Jewish circles.” He has never publicly retracted that statement, and two other cabinet members, Foreign Minister Witold Waszczykowski and Culture Minister Piotr Glinski have also declined to condemn the *Protocols* when asked to do so.

Macierewicz’s original 2002 statement was given to Radio Maryja, the notorious antisemitic radio station that has been condemned by the Vatican for its anti-Jewish remarks. Radio Maryja’s history of antisemitism is both well documented and current. Already in 2008 the State Department’s *Global Anti-Semitism Report* called Radio Maryja “one of Europe’s most blatantly anti-Semitic media venues.” More recent examples abound. In September the founder and head of Radio Maryja, Father Tadeusz Rydzyk berated an unruly audience by telling them that they should not be indulging in “synagogue-type behavior”.

In November one commentator on the station stated that “the Jewish Lobby in Poland demonstrates its racial solidarity with the Ukrainian oligarchs”. In December he made the blatantly antisemitic claim that “The U.S. media and entertainment industry are dependent on the Jewish lobby. It is similar to the Stalinist terror, which was organized and implemented by Jewish communism.” And in the same month he made a trip to the US where he spoke in New York, New Jersey and Massachusetts and among other antisemitic remarks referred to the “Jewish faction” which allegedly is ruling Poland.

It is bitterly ironic then that this allegedly Jewish run government has become a huge subsidizer of Radio Maryja. According to news reports the government has paid out the staggering sum of over seven million dollars to Radio Maryja, and was even issuing a postage stamp to commemorate the station’s twenty-fifth anniversary.

This is not the only questionable action taken by the current government in Poland. Other recent moves include the covert hiring of an American publicist of Jewish descent to cast antisemitic aspersions at a prominent critic of Poland’s current policy. The publicist denied in writing that he was employed by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but was fired only when his contract was posted online.

Another was the more recent firing of the Head of the Polish Institute in Berlin, allegedly for “giving too much attention to Jewish subjects”. While the Polish Foreign Ministry has denied

this was the reason an October memo from the Polish ambassador in Berlin to the director warned “not to overdo the emphasis... on the importance of Polish-Jewish dialogue.”

However, the most egregious example so far is the attempt to criminalize Holocaust research and even the memoirs of Holocaust survivors. This is centered on a proposed amendment to Polish law and reads

"Article 55a. 1. Whoever publicly claims, contrary to the historical facts, the Polish Nation's or the Polish State's responsibility or partial responsibility for the Nazi crimes committed by the German Third Reich ...or for any other crimes against peace, crimes against humanity, or war crimes, or otherwise grossly diminishes the responsibility of the actual perpetrators of these crimes, shall be liable to a fine or imprisonment for up to 3 years...

Article 55b. Notwithstanding the legal framework applicable in the jurisdiction where the illicit act was committed, this Act shall apply to Polish citizens and to aliens in the event of committing any of the crimes referred to in Articles 55 and 55a”.

Thus, according to this law, since Poland was occupied by Nazi Germany during the time of the Holocaust, any person who makes a statement that refers to Polish collaboration or complicity in the murder of the millions of Jews killed on Polish soil is committing a crime. This is not totally a new initiative, as Poland is already trying to move against the eminent Princeton historian Jan Gross. Gross, who previously received the Polish Order of Merit in 1996 is the author of *Neighbors* (Princeton, 2001) which tells of the murder of several hundred Jews in the town of Jedwabne, by their Polish neighbors on July 10, 1941. The book was a National Book Award finalist in 2001 and caused a major controversy in Poland where its findings were hotly debated but did lead two presidents of Poland to apologize for what happened at Jedwabne. In an interview with a German newspaper in 2015 Gross stated that in his opinion Poles murdered more Jews than they killed Germans during the war (a statement that is supported by many leading experts but that is highly controversial in Poland). This led to Gross' being investigated on the charge of libeling the Polish nation (under the law “that any person who publicly insults the Polish nation is punishable by up to three years in prison”.) He has since been hauled in for five hours of questioning and the threat continues to hang over him. Indeed, the first prosecutor assigned to his case recommended dropping it, but was overruled by his superior in what appears to be a political decision. But Prof. Gross is not really the focal point here – as an esteemed senior scholar at Princeton he will not suffer from this attempt at censorship of inconvenient history. The full impact of the law can be felt in its chilling effect on less established and younger scholars, who may fear to speak openly on their findings or be dissuaded from even beginning to research the subject of Poland and the Holocaust. This is clearly an attempt to legislate history, and as the renowned Holocaust scholar Prof. Yehuda Bauer with his colleague Prof. Havi Dreifuss wrote “It is not the job of any government (in a democratic country) to determine historical facts, beyond very obvious ones; the fact of the Holocaust, for instance, or the fact of the persecution of Poles by Nazi Germany.”

However, there is another aspect of this proposed law that is equally frightening. Should this proposed amendment become law, anyone, anyplace who is convicted of “shaming” Poland's reputation in relation to the Holocaust faces a potential three year prison sentence.

Consider the words of Sigi Isak, born in Berlin and a survivor of the Plaszow labor camp and Gross-Rosen concentration camp who stated “In Poland they were -- they were terrible before the war the Poles. (I) even call them worse than the Germans because they did ugly things in the war.”

Or of Abraham Kolski, born in Lodz, Poland and a survivor of the Treblinka death camp who said “I don't say one hundred percent Poles are bad...and maybe a ten percent (of the) Poles are good. The other, even today, very very bad. You can't imagine. You can't imagine. You are an American. You can't imagine. They are worse than the Russians. They are worse than the Germans.”

Or of Lonia Mosak, born in Poland and a survivor of Auschwitz who remembered that “we decided we're going back to Poland. ...We didn't realize that Poland was worse than with the Germans. They didn't want any Jew to come there because then they claim their properties. So they didn't want us. So when you went out on the street, you saw laying dead Jews,”

These three statements are available in the archives of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. They are far from unique. I have heard similar statements from survivors many times when I was interviewing them for Simon Wiesenthal or for other Nazi war criminal investigations. Their words are the testimony of Holocaust survivors who felt the sting of personal relationships fatally betrayed and who have recounted their emotions and experiences and now, under this proposed new law are potentially facing criminal charges at this late stage of their lives.

In my capacity as Chair of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) Committee on Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial I was asked to participate with three others in a High-Level Mission to Warsaw to discuss the IHRA's great concern over this proposed law. This amendment and the Polish actions clearly fly in the face of the Stockholm Declaration and IHRA's mission, which requires member countries to share a commitment to “to encourage the study of the Holocaust in all its dimensions.” And indeed, we would expect Poland, as a member of the IHRA since 1999, to live up to that commitment. However, what I experienced in Warsaw was something different. There I was told directly that the Poles were very upset to see the usage of the term “Polish death camps” still appearing in the West and were determined to try and wipe it out. This was puzzling, because IHRA and most responsible Holocaust related institutions and scholars shared Poland's feeling about the inaccuracy and inappropriateness of that term; indeed I had been instrumental in my own institution removing it from our web site a decade ago. Despite that we were told that since that term still sometimes appeared the Polish government had now decided to legislate what would be legal and what would be illegal in Holocaust discourse, thus creating a new precedent of a Western democratic country potentially criminalizing responsible scholars and Holocaust survivors for their research and memories.

And while Poland might be the most acute example, it is far from the only one. In Hungary, over the past few years, there were a series of government inspired initiatives that also attempted to distort the history of the Holocaust to favor a narrow political agenda. They began with the insertion into the Preamble of the new constitution a clause that exempted Hungary from any responsibility for actions that occurred under Nazi (and Communist) occupation; this appearing

to absolve Hungary of any collaboration in the deportation and murder of almost four hundred and fifty thousand Jews after the Nazi occupation in 1944. However, the reality is that the Nazi unit that organized and supervised the occupation never numbered more than one hundred twenty five men and could not have successfully accomplished its mission without local collaboration, or that the mass murder of Budapest's remaining Jewish population took place after the Nazis pulled out and the city was ruled by the local Arrow Cross collaborators.

Other actions included the insertion into the national curriculum of antisemitic writers, or the erection of statues to politicians who were notorious for their antisemitism. One of them, Balint Homan even introduced the Hungarian version of the infamous Nuremberg laws which began the disenfranchisement of Hungarian Jews and opened up the door to their despoiling and eventual deportation. Another flash point was the proposed Holocaust museum that was to be under the direction of an ideologue whose writings contained antisemitic themes and who refused to be open about her proposed plan for the museum. All this led to a crisis in which Mazsihisz, the official Jewish community organization, felt compelled to boycott all of the government sponsored commemorations of the 70th anniversary of the 1944 Hungarian deportations. Through my role at IHRA I was deeply involved in these efforts, and I would like to especially thank Chairman Smith who wrote a pivotal letter to Prime Minister Orban that I believe helped the Prime Minister understand the damage that these efforts were causing to Hungary's reputation. The efforts of Ira Forman, then our Special Envoy on Antisemitism were also extremely helpful, and the vigorous and bipartisan response here and the reaction internationally apparently helped convince the Prime Minister to reassess the government's position and to finally announce that the museum director would be pulled off the project which would only be finished with the cooperation of the Jewish community and international experts, and no more government funding or land would be made available for the construction of monuments to questionable World War II era figures.

We can see a similar pattern in Croatia where the local Jewish community has felt it necessary to also boycott official government Holocaust Remembrance Commemorations for the past two years. The first time it was connected to what the community claimed was the "revitalizing" of the Ustasha, the brutal Croatian collaborationist movement. An example of this was the appointment of Zlatko Hasanbegovic as the Minister of Culture. Hasanbegovic had been photographed wearing the cap and insignia of the Ustashe, and had published articles earlier defending the Ustashe. While he was the Minister of Culture he screened a film at the Jasenovac concentration camp that claimed that the number of victims killed in the camp was less than half than historians had been estimating (taking the generally recognized total of close to eighty to one hundred thousand and cutting it to between twenty to forty thousand victims) thus encouraging those who would minimize the Ustashe crimes and claim that the camp was actually only a labor camp.

Hasanbagovic only lasted a few months in office, but even after his departure problems persist. This year the community reacted to the erection of a plaque with Ustashe slogans in front of the camp. In the words of Jewish community leader Ognjen Kraus "We took the decision on the basis of reactions by the government, parliament and the president. The problem is not (just) a plaque in Jasenovac including the Ustasha salute, but the relativisation of everything (to do with the Holocaust)." This includes a judge who in a case involving a threat to the director of the camp

also questioned the number of victims, and school officials who this past January removed an exhibit about Anne Frank because they considered it unfair to the Ustashe. And finally the president of Croatia was photographed holding the Ustashe flag last November. To be fair, the President has also condemned the Ustashe, the school officials were reprimanded, and as mentioned above Hasanbegovic is no longer a minister. Nevertheless, the atmosphere still remains toxic enough for the community to have taken the drastic step of boycotting this past January's Holocaust commemoration and for civil society to address an open letter to the Croatian political leadership calling it to develop a culture of remembrance that would allow Croatia to accurately portray and learn from its past.

In Serbia a few weeks ago proposed new legislation that would create a state commission to commemorate Holocaust victims was leaked and immediately criticized by the local Jewish community and human rights activists for not mentioning the role of Serbian collaborators during the war. Although officials have cautioned that this proposal was not in final form it comes on the heels of an ongoing effort by Serbian apologists to rehabilitate Milan Nedic, the Prime minister of Serbia's collaborationist government during World War II. Under his rule Belgrade was the first European city to be declared *Judenfrei* (free of Jews) and ninety percent of Serbia's Jews were murdered.

Ukraine is another example of a country attempting to legislate history, especially the history of World War II. In an attempt to whitewash local Nazi collaborators and antisemites it recently passed a law called Law No. 2538-, "On the legal status and honoring of fighters for Ukraine's independence in the 20th century." This law states that "the public denial of...the just cause of the fighters for Ukrainian independence in the 20th century insults the dignity of the Ukrainian people and is illegal." However, these "independence fighters" were in actuality members of organizations (OUN, UPA) who deeply cooperated with the Nazis and are considered responsible by historians for murdering about one hundred thousand Poles and tens of thousands of Jews based on the crudest antisemitism.

Ironically, the other country that is also attempting to censor history is Vladimir Putin's Russia. Russia has successfully applied a law that forbids the publication of what they describe as "falsehoods" about the Soviet Union's role during World War II. In one case a journalist was convicted after writing the incontrovertible historical fact that "the Communists and Germany jointly invaded Poland, sparking off World War II. That is, communism and Nazism closely collaborated ...". Although the entire world is aware of the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact of 1939 and the joint Nazi-Soviet invasion of Poland in September 1939, Putin's Russia has now made it a crime to speak or write about it.

This attempts cannot be described as Holocaust denial. Today to be uncloaked and exposed as an active denier means the end of one's respectability as David Irving, the Holocaust denying and antisemitic British writer found out in 2000. Irving sued the American historian Deborah Lipstadt and her publisher for libel and lost; as a result of the verdict in the trial Irving went from a writer whose work was cited by major historians to an isolated and ignored figure reduced to peddling guided tours to small groups of sympathizers and speaking at neo-Nazi conventions.

However, distortion of the Holocaust is a different matter entirely. Here we are not speaking of outright denial, the kind that still lingers in disreputable corners and as the official policy of the Iranian government, but rather the position that pays lip service to the reality of the Holocaust but tries to evade assigning responsibility for political reasons. This type of Holocaust distortion has been around ever since the end of the war. A version of it was official policy in many Communist countries, where while the number of victims was sometimes even exaggerated; the specific Jewish component of the identity of the victims and the focus of Nazi policy was erased in a politically motivated rendering of all the victims as generic victims of fascism, perhaps most famously in the original plaque at Babi Yar in Kyiv.

These attempts to craft and apply laws to evade and distort the reality of the Holocaust in an attempt to strengthen national myths were a major reason that the 31 member states of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance felt the need to adopt by consensus a “Working Definition of Holocaust Denial and Distortion” in 2013.

(<https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/working-definition-holocaust-denial-and-distortion>)

As the primary author of that definition I was determined that the inclusion of the section on distortion was vital to the definition’s integrity. Without it any definition would be limited and would avoid the most pressing current issue. There were some countries that preferred to leave out the aspect of distortion precisely because it allowed them to continue to politicize the Holocaust. However, because of our (the combined experts and diplomats) refusal to accept any watered down version it took five years of negotiations before we could get the Working Definition adopted. But having successfully achieved adoption of the definition, the international community now has a benchmark that includes and describes this current version of Holocaust distortion and can be used to challenge those misleading narratives.

In this climate of high level distortion of the Holocaust it should be no surprise that according to a report by Israel’s ambassador to Sweden since last spring lectures and school appearances by Holocaust survivors have disrupted by a small skinhead group called the Nordic Resistance Movement and the police have refused to provide security for the schools under the grounds that the skinheads “do not yet appear to provoke violence.”!

Sad to say, the United States is not exempt from some of these issues as well. Just last week a synagogue in Seattle was vandalized and on it was spray painted “The Holocaust is fake history”. This explains the consternation and strong reactions of so many segments of the Jewish community in the United States when this past January 27 the White House statement on Holocaust Remembrance Day omitted any mention of Jews. The US has long been the leader in maintaining the need for historical integrity on this subject, and especially in light of the disturbing trends noted above, our leadership is needed more than ever.

Alongside this disturbing international trend is the rise in anti-Semitism on college campuses here at home. In the first six months of 2016, there was a 45% increase in anti-Semitic activity on college campuses. What should be safe academic spaces are quickly becoming hotbeds of anti-Jewish bias, with students each year reporting greater discomfort at publicly identifying as Jewish or as supporters of Israel.

Last term, the Senate passed by unanimous consent a bill that is critical to combatting rising anti-Semitism on US college campuses. The Anti-Semitism Awareness Act would require the Department of Education “to take into consideration the definition of anti-Semitism as part of [its] assessment of whether the alleged practice was motivated by anti-Semitic bias.” This definition would serve as an essential tool in interpreting whether harassment, intimidation, or other seemingly discriminatory behavior directed at Jewish students is motivated by anti-Semitism and should be investigated. The definition is a global standard, which is adopted by the State Department and the 31 governments that are members of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. The Anti-Semitism Awareness Act is the best tool for pushing back against anti-Semitism on college campuses while protecting free speech, explicitly stating that “Nothing in this Act, or an amendment made by this Act, shall be construed to diminish or infringe upon any right protected under the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States.”

While the Simon Wiesenthal Center is firmly committed to the First Amendment and as shown above rejects government attempts to censor historical and political dialogue, we recognize the need for encouraging service providers to deal with the flood of hate speech, threats, attempts to intimidate, stereotypes, wild conspiracies and calls to violence emanating from both right and left wing extremist groups and individuals. With the power of social media comes the need for a sense of responsibility, and we call upon the service providers to live up to their terms of service and to begin to consistently and firmly reject those postings that qualify as antisemitic in particular and hate speech in general. Specifically, we strongly urge that the companies immediately adopt the two internationally accepted definitions of Holocaust Denial and Distortion and of Antisemitism that have been adopted by the 31 nations of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. These working definitions were specifically adopted with the aim of providing a tool for exactly this purpose; that is to give those who are wrestling with these issues a tool that was crafted by international experts and adopted by political representatives of those 31 countries with the aim of providing a common language and understanding of both antisemitism and Holocaust denial and distortion for practical use.

With all the difficult situations that have been noted above I would like to close with some positive examples drawn from our direct experience.

As noted above, thanks to the combined efforts of committed international experts, diplomats and the local Jewish community, it appears that efforts to distort the history of the Holocaust in Hungary have been halted, at least temporarily. This shows what can be accomplished by people committed to maintaining the integrity of the historical narrative of the Holocaust and sets a powerful example for us to follow.

The adoption by the 31 member nations of the IHRA of the two “Working Definitions” represents an extremely significant international effort to fight antisemitism in its different manifestations. Here I would like to specifically acknowledge the vital contribution of the Past Chair of the IHRA, Amb. Mihnea Constantinescu of Romania, who was responsible for politically shepherding the antisemitism definition through to its successful adoption. Having been responsible for introducing this definition in IHRA and working closely with Amb. Constantinescu allowed me to see his total commitment to the definition’s adoption. I am glad to

also recognize the efforts of my colleague in the US IHRA delegation, Dr. Robert Williams, the incoming Chair of IHRA's Committee on Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial, for his efforts in working toward the adoption of the definition. And I want to also thank the Special Envoy on Holocaust Issues, Thomas Yazdgerdi, and the Deputy Director of that office, Liz Nakian, for their strong leadership of the US IHRA delegation.

I would also like to point to the success of a country, Azerbaijan that is 96% Muslim and that is known as a country that protects religious freedom. There are some significant domestic issues, but the Jewish community is at home there. On Sept. 29 the Simon Wiesenthal Center opened its renowned exhibit "*People, Book, Land: The 3,500 Year Relationship of the Jewish People with the Holy Land*" in Baku. This is the same exhibit that Chairman Royce and Ranking Member Engel sponsored in Congress two years ago, and I want to publicly acknowledge and thank them for their leadership.

Another country, Bahrain, was just visited by a delegation from the Simon Wiesenthal Center for meetings that included the King of Bahrain. While there our delegation saw Shia and Suni mosques together, just one half block from a church and Christian compound. And, during the recent Hindu holiday of *Maha Shivratri*, over ten thousand Hindu's came for the festival. Although not directly referring to antisemitism, this example is significant in that it shows what is possible in our world.

I would like to conclude with a series of recommendations.

First is the appointment of a strong Special Envoy on Antisemitism with sufficient funding, staffing and political support for effective action. The previous Special Envoy, Ira Forman, built on the accomplishments of his predecessors Gregg Rickman and Hannah Rosenthal, and became a vigorous and forceful advocate in fighting international antisemitism. Fighting antisemitism has always been a bipartisan commitment, and in today's fractured political world it is more necessary than ever that the US maintain its diplomatic and moral leadership in this issue. Indeed, we would strongly suggest that the position even be upgraded, to that of Ambassador, thus demonstrating the importance attached by our government to this issue. Currently seven other countries have followed the US in creating such a position, and the European Union has also appointed a representative on the issue. It would send a terrible signal now for the US to appear to be backing away from the issue just as others are beginning to engage on it.

Second is continuing to push for the adoption of the IHRA's Working Definition of Antisemitism.

The definition has been adopted by the United Kingdom, the city of London and Israel. Other countries are considering its adoption as well. Thanks to the efforts of Rabbi Baker it was almost adopted by the OSCE, obtaining the backing of fifty six of the OSCE members, with only Russia blocking it. We would like to return to the OSCE and try again, but it requires strong US backing to have any chance to succeed.

Third would be the adoption in the US of the Anti-Semitism Awareness Act, which is based on the IHRA definition. Adoption would offer an expert derived internationally accepted yardstick

to define antisemitism on our campuses and would provide necessary clarity and protection to students, administrators and everyone associated with college life.

Fourth would be the creation of a special Task Force by the Attorney General to deal with the ongoing series of threats to the Jewish community in the US. These unprecedented threats have challenged basic assumptions about security and belonging for American Jews. The immediate establishment of such a Task Force would provide a strong symbol to all that there can be no place for antisemitism in American life.

Fifth would be the designation of a specific government office to function as a central focal point for domestic issues relating to antisemitism. Currently the responsibilities are split between a variety of agencies and departments, such as the Department of Education, the FBI, Homeland Security, etc. The designation of such an office would provide coordination and an address for both the Jewish community and for those working on the issue.

Sixth, both in Europe and in the US, it is essential that security services to protect the Jewish communities of those countries continue to be provided by the home countries. Security for residents is a basic human right and expectation, and the Jewish communities should not be charged extra for the right to live in a safe environment. Both the political level, judiciary and law enforcement need to take the threats against these communities seriously and to respond vigorously and in timely fashion to threats and actions that imperil the safety of Jews and Jewish institutions.

Finally, as mentioned above, internet service providers need to recognize that they share in the common responsibility for the state of our societies. As with other industries, the drive for profits carries responsibilities as well. Thus we urge that they immediately adopt the IHRA Working Definitions of Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial and Distortion to serve as tools to measure whether specific posts are in violation of the terms of service that already exist. This is a simple first step toward solving a problem that they have helped to create by turning a blind eye to the content displayed, particularly on social media and sometimes to the ensuing results as well.

Thank you very much for your leadership, commitment and action in fighting antisemitism.