



## HELSINKI COMMISSION HEARING

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UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON  
SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

# Testimony :: His Excellency Natan Sharansky

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Conference on Anti-Semitism

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you and the committee today.

When I was a dissident in the former Soviet Union, one of my regular activities was monitoring antisemitism, and smuggling out evidence and records of such activity to the West. Back then, I believed that the free world, particularly after the Holocaust, would always be a staunch ally in the struggle against antisemitism.

Unfortunately, I was wrong.

Today, as the Minister in the Israeli Government in charge of monitoring antisemitism, I find myself summoning on a regular basis the Ambassadors of Western European states to protest antisemitic attacks on Jews in their countries and the often meek response of their governments.

Over the past four years, we have witnessed a resurgence of antisemitic activity in the democratic world. In Europe, synagogues have been burned, rabbis have been abused in the streets, Jewish children on their way to school have been physically attacked, and Jewish cemeteries have been desecrated.

This so-called "new antisemitism" poses a unique challenge. Let me explain why. My experience has convinced me that fighting evil demands moral clarity. Evil cannot be defeated if we are unable to draw clear moral lines. Indeed, when good and evil become merely a matter of opinion, evil thrives.

That is what makes the battle against the new anti-Semitism so difficult. To modern eyes, classical anti-Semitism is easily discernable. If we watch films that show Jews draining the blood of non-Jewish children or plotting to take over the world, most of us would immediately recognize it as anti-Semitism.

But the new anti-Semitism is far more subtle. Whereas classical anti-Semitism is aimed at the Jewish people or the Jewish religion, the new antisemitism is aimed at the Jewish State. Since this anti-Semitism can hide behind the veneer of legitimate criticism of Israel, it is much more difficult to expose. Making the task even harder is that this hatred is advanced in the name of values most of us would consider unimpeachable, such as human rights. If it is true that one cannot fight evil without moral clarity, it will be especially difficult to fight the new anti-Semitism, which is an evil that masquerades as good.

Let me be clear that I believe that the Jewish state should not be above criticism. Indeed, a democratic state like Israel can appreciate that criticism is not only legitimate but an essential means to effect positive change. But I would like to propose a test that will allow us to separate legitimate criticism of Israel from anti-Semitism.

I call it the 3D test, but I can assure you that only the name is original. The test itself merely applies the same criteria that were traditionally used to identify anti-Semitism to the new anti-Semitism.

The first D is the test of demonization. Demonization has always been a primary expression of anti-Semitism. Jews were portrayed for centuries as the embodiment of evil, and accused among other things of deicide, drinking the blood of children, poisoning wells, and controlling the world's banks and governments.

Today, we must ask ourselves whether the Jewish State is being demonized. Are the actions of Israel blown out of all sensible proportion? For example, the comparisons between Israelis and Nazis and between Palestinian refugee camps and Auschwitz – comparisons which are heard practically everyday within “enlightened” quarters of Europe – can only be considered anti-Semitic.

Those who live in refugee camps clearly live in miserable conditions. But even those who would wrongly blame Israel for the fact that four generations of Palestinians have lived in these camps cannot legitimately compare these camps to Auschwitz. Those who draw such analogies either do not know anything about the Holocaust or, more plausibly, are deliberately trying to paint modern day Israel as the embodiment of evil. This criticism is clearly beyond the pale.

The second D is the test of Double Standards. For thousands of years, a clear sign of anti-Semitism was treating Jews differently than other peoples, from the discriminatory laws that many nations enacted against them to the tendency to judge their behavior by a different yardstick. Similarly, today we must ask whether criticism of Israel is being applied selectively. It is anti-Semitism, for instance, when Israel is singled out by the United Nations for human rights abuses while the behavior of tried and true abusers, like China, Iran, Cuba, and Syria are ignored. Likewise, it is anti-Semitism when Israel's Magen David Adom, alone among the world's ambulance services, is denied admission to the International Red Cross.

The third D is the test of Delegitimization. In the past, anti-Semites tried to deny the legitimacy of the Jewish religion, the Jewish people or both. Today, they are trying to deny the legitimacy of the Jewish State. While criticism of an Israeli policy may not be anti-Semitic, the denial of Israel's right to exist is always anti-Semitic. If other peoples have a right to live securely in their homelands, then the Jewish people have a right to live securely in their homeland as well.

If we are to fight the new anti-Semitism, we must make sure that we do not blur the line between legitimate criticism of Israel and antisemitism. Like a pair of glasses in a 3D movie that allows us to see everything with perfect clarity, the 3D test I have proposed will ensure that those lines remain clear. Only then can the new anti-Semitism be effectively addressed.

But to see the rabid antisemitism that exists today in the Muslim world, we need no special glasses. We only have to open our eyes.

The Berlin Conference, which was important in putting anti-Semitism on the international community's radar screen, unfortunately ignored the most vicious, persistent, and genocidal forms of anti-Semitism emanating today from radical elements in the Arab and Moslem worlds.

You have just seen with your own eyes a film, produced by Syria's state-run media, that was broadcast to tens of millions of Muslims around the world, including million in Western Europe. A similar film was produced in Egypt two years ago and shown throughout Ramadan when the viewing audience would be as large as possible.

I have also brought with me today a one hundred and fifty page study entitled "Anti-Semitism in the Contemporary Middle East." The study, prepared by our office, surveys anti-Semitic reporting, editorials and editorial caricatures in the government-controlled press of Egypt, Iran,

Jordan, Lebanon, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states. In the more than 100 editorial cartoons that are included in this report, Jews and Israelis are invariably represented as poisonous snakes, murderous Nazis and bloodthirsty Crusaders. Please take a look at it. I am sure that even a cursory glance will prove quite shocking.

We found that vicious anti-Semitism that expressly calls for massive terrorism and genocide against Jews, Zionists and the State of Israel is becoming more and more commonplace across the Arab Middle East. And please note: the overwhelming majority of this propaganda is issued from the government-controlled media and from supposedly respectable publishing houses closely tied to the Arab regimes.

Here is a brief review of the main findings of the report:

- Classic European anti-Semitic imagery is widespread in the Middle East, as is holocaust denial and the identification of Israel as a Nazi state.
- The borders between anti-Semitism, anti-Americanism and anti-Westernism have become almost completely blurred.
- Islamic religious themes, quotations and sayings are being widely mobilized to demonize Jews and Israelis and to justify the outright annihilation of the State of Israel and all its Jewish and non-Jewish supporters.
- The Arab-Israeli conflict is increasingly portrayed as part of an eternal confrontation between the pan-Islamic nation and the infidels (Jews and Christians alike), who embody all primeval evil.
- All Israelis – men, women and children – and Jews around the world, as well as their "Crusader allies" are held responsible for the crimes of the Jews and Zionists and considered legitimate targets.
- Finally, the children's books in some Arab countries -- including Egypt, which has signed a peace treaty with Israel – regularly portray Jews and murderers and thieves.

Mr. Chairman,

I recognize that there have been positive developments in the fight against anti-Semitism over the last year or so. The OSCE has held several good meetings on this issue – and I applaud Secretary Powell's leadership in this regard. And last month the UN Commission on Human Rights condemned anti-Semitism in three separate resolutions which were adopted by consensus.

But these important initiatives unfortunately are not sufficient to combat state-sponsored anti-Semitism, especially the Arab and Islamic state sponsored anti-Semitism of which I have spoken today. For real progress to be made, the free world must be willing to not only publicly and forcefully condemn this antisemitism, but also to pursue a policy of linkage against states that support anti-Semitism.

The effectiveness of a policy based on linkage was powerfully demonstrated a generation ago after a group of dissidents inside the Soviet Union, including myself, decided to form the Helsinki Group in the wake of the Helsinki accords – the very agreement which led to the establishment of the OSCE.

With the help of courageous leaders in the West who were willing to link their relations with the Soviets to their treatment of their own people, the Helsinki Group helped ensure that the Soviets could not take one step in the international arena without their human rights policies becoming an issue. As a result, real progress was made.

The massive flow of anti-Semitic propaganda from the Arab and Moslem world can no longer be ignored or tolerated. I believe that combating anti-Semitism ought to become a much more prominent issue in the bilateral relations between America and the Arab and Moslem worlds. Linkage can be used to marginalize the extremists and to encourage and support those who reject this virulent hatred.

Antisemitism is not a threat only to Jews. History has shown us that left unchecked, the forces behind anti-Semitism will imperil all the values and freedoms that our civilization holds dear.

We must not let this happen. We must do everything in our power to fight antisemitism. Armed with moral clarity, determination, and a common purpose, I know that this is a fight that we can and will win.

Thank you Mister Chairman.

