

## **Statement of the Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton, United States Senator**

### **Part II: “Taking Stock: Combating Anti-Semitism in the OSCE Region”**

**February 7, 2008**

Mr. Chairman, thank you for calling this very important hearing and for your leadership and that of co-chair Ben Cardin. The commission’s work remains critical in calling attention to the unique scourge of anti-Semitism as well as other forms of intolerance. Members of the U.S. Helsinki Commission have been at the forefront of efforts to fight the rise of anti-Semitic violence that swept through Western Europe beginning in 2002. Working through the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and with support of the White House and State Department, we have successfully moved the OSCE to begin to tackle the perpetual evil of anti-Semitism in real and concrete ways.

Anti-Semitism continues still despite the progress that we rightly can point to in bringing the attention of the governments and the people of the OSCE countries to bear on this issue, we have much work ahead of us.

I recently joined my colleagues on the Commission in sending a letter to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice underscoring the importance of American contributions to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and its efforts to fight anti-Semitism. We have expressed strong concern that the President’s recently proposed budget would cut funding for these important efforts.

For decades, American leadership in the fight against anti-Semitism has been a source of inspiration and pride at home and around the world. In Europe, where the scars of anti-Semitism run deep, our efforts have been particularly meaningful. Now is not the time to reduce our commitment to this important issue or to send the signal that combating anti-Semitism is no longer a top priority for the United States. We jointly urged the Administration to reconsider these reductions in support for the OSCE and work with the Congress to keep the United States at the forefront of the fight against anti-Semitism.

The OSCE and the U.S. Congress must continue to condemn anti-Semitism and those who perpetuate it. We must say loudly and clearly that purveyors of hate are the enemies of freedom, and I think that is what is called for: to rally the world on behalf of stamping out anti-Semitism.

Congressman Tom Lantos’ voice carried this message clearly for years, and I am deeply saddened by his passing. The courageous and improbable journey of his life was an inspiration to his constituents and to all of us who knew him. Tom was just sixteen years old when the Nazis occupied his native Hungary and he lost much of his family to the Holocaust. In those dark days, Tom bore witness to the worst of human cruelty and devoted his life to stopping it. And so he came to America with nothing but the clothes on his back and the ideals he described in an essay that won him a college scholarship.

Those ideals, combined with his optimism, intelligence, and hard work, would eventually lead this self-described 'penniless immigrant' to the halls of the United States Congress. He stood up for the rights of all people, particularly though the Jewish people, the people of Israel and the people who deserve and need the support and attention that we are bringing today. Despite all that Tom experienced - or perhaps because of it - he understood in his bones that we have a profound duty to one another. Tom taught us to stand up for what's right especially when it was hard. We must continue this battle against anti-Semitism.

So, Mr. Chairman, I thank you for your stalwart support of this Commission and your work on this issue and the follow-up that you are committed to doing.