

Press Release

Klein Applauds State Department Efforts to Draw Attention to Anti-Semitic Activity Around the World

March 14, 2008

WASHINGTON, DC--In response to the State Department's release of a report on global anti-Semitism yesterday, Representatives Ron Klein (FL-22) and Mike Pence (IN-06), co-chairmen of the Congressional Taskforce Against Anti-Semitism, delivered a letter to Gregg J. Rickman, Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism and the author of the study.

In the letter, Klein and Pence applaud the State Department's efforts to call attention to the continuing scourge of anti-Semitism and invite Mr. Rickman to Capitol Hill to brief members of the Taskforce on steps that can be taken to halt the disturbing trend of increasing anti-Semitic activity worldwide noted in the report.

The State Department's Office to Combat and Monitor Anti-Semitism was created by the Global Anti-Semitism Review Act of 2004. This bipartisan, bicameral legislation was sponsored by the late Congressman Tom Lantos along with Congressman Chris Smith (NJ-04) and Senator George Voinovich (OH).

The text of Representative Klein and Representative Pence's letter can be found below.

Dear Mr. Rickman,

We would like to applaud the State Department on its recent publication of the Report on Contemporary Global Anti-Semitism. This recent upsurge of anti-Semitism is most disturbing, and it is clear that hatred of Jews is prevalent in both communities with sizable Jewish populations and those which have only a few Jewish members.

From South America to Saudi Arabia, anti-Semitism has been reborn through the republication of traditional hate propaganda such as *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* and *Mein Kampf*. This renaissance of hate is supplemented by newer forms such as the trivialization of the Holocaust, the blame of Israeli policy on the entirety of the Jewish people and accusations of exaggerated influence and ulterior motives of the Jews on politics and the media. Alarming many of these newer forms of anti-Semitism manifest themselves in the perpetuation of hateful stereotypes through didactic and seemingly innocent cartoons directed at children. Much of this newer wave of anti-Semitism seems to stem from political motivations of hate for America, Israel, and democratic ideals in general.

Furthermore, we commend your acknowledgement of the Internet as a viral and menacing method of spreading anti-Semitic hate. As we continue to monitor trends throughout the world, we must be mindful that anti-Semitism can spread easily on the internet, a place that knows no boundaries.

We also commend your objective reporting of all incidents and trends of anti-Semitism—whether they occurred in enemy countries or our allies. The attacks on the Jewish communities range from isolated incidents such as the desecration of places of worship, to harassment and even murder.

We are encouraged by the examples that you cite of those who seek to spread tolerance within their borders and throughout the world. The models of the British Parliamentary Inquiry into Anti-Semitism and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe are worthy of praise.

We hope that you will join us on Capitol Hill so that you can present this report to the Congressional Task Force on Anti-Semitism. Our Taskforce members look forward to learning about the next steps for your Office and how you plan to use this report to further our mutual goals.

Finally, we applaud you for dedicating this report to our friend, Tom Lantos. We look forward to working with you to carry out his legacy of the promotion of human rights and the elimination of intolerance.

Sincerely,

RON KLEIN

Co-Chair

MIKE PENCE

Co-Chair