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House Committee on Foreign Affairs

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Semitism and Anti-Israel Bias in the UN, Palestinian
Authority, and NGO Community” - Subcommittee on
Global Health, Global Human Rights**

The White House released the first-ever U.S. national strategy to combat antisemitism. We thank President Biden, Second Gentleman Emhoff, Special Envoy Lipstadt, and Ambassador Rice for compiling this comprehensive plan. For the first time, a leading state characterizes the problem and develops such a comprehensive plan to combat antisemitism. This plan is a good reaction to the fact that antisemitism is growing in all its manifestations. Antisemitism on the right against the Jews and on the left against the State of Israel. This initiative is very welcomed by the Jewish world. At the same time, one very important point causes a mixed reaction.

"There are several definitions of antisemitism, which serve as valuable tools to raise awareness and increase understanding of antisemitism. The most prominent is the non-legally binding "working definition" of antisemitism adopted in 2016 by the 31-member states of the International Holocaust

Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), which the United States has embraced.

In addition, the Administration welcomes and appreciates the Nexus Document and notes other such efforts".

Why should this be a problem? But what is the fundamental difference between IHRA and other definitions? The IHRA definition is the only one that links between new and old antisemitism. Antisemitism which directed against Jews, and antisemitism toward the state of Israel.

However, a question is being asked, which we have been confronting for many years - Why can criticism of Israel be called antisemitism? The oldest hatred directed against the Jews. Israel is a relatively young state with quite a few political disputes. People who disagree with the idea of the existence of a Jewish state, but at the same time do not hate Jews - why can they be called antisemites? This is a significant point, as it is today one of the main causes of controversy that weakens the fight against antisemitism.

I'm dealing with this question practically all my life. First, as a human rights activist and political prisoner in the Soviet

Union, later as the minister in the Israeli government dealing with the problem of antisemitism, and later as the head of the Jewish Agency, dealing with the connections between Israel and the Jewish communities all over the world.

I want to turn to the history of this question. In the Soviet Union, where I grew up, this problem did not exist. Each time when official Soviet propaganda starts a new round of attacks on Israel, every Jew, whether he knows what Zionism means or not, knows that he has a problem. They are all treated as not loyal to the Soviet Union, but loyal to Zionist Israel.

Attacks on the Jews have always been a convenient platform for attacks on Israel and vice versa. Assuming that all this is a direct result of the dictatorial regime of the Soviet Union, which needs a convenient scapegoat for accusations, an external and internal enemy, and a more convenient scapegoat than the Jews and Israel cannot be imagined.

Therefore, when in 1975 the Soviet Union initiated a resolution that Zionism is racism, it was adopted only thanks to the communist bloc. The Free World voted against it.

I thought that in the free world, this would not happen.

It was all the more surprising when at the beginning of 2000 at the first U.N. conference against global racism in Durban - the only result of this conference was the accusation of Israel as an apartheid state. Soon the cartoons published in the international press against Israel surprisingly began to resemble those in the Soviet and Nazi press against the Jews. Israel, which fights against terrorist attacks daily in defense of itself, has been declared to be fighting the Palestinians, as the Nazis fought the Jews, and Palestinian refugee camps were compared to Auschwitz. All this had nothing to do with constructive criticism of the policies of Israel, which deserved this or that criticism like any other democratic country. It was then, 20 years ago, that I proposed my three-D test to distinguish justified criticism of Israel from new antisemitism. The Demonization of Jews, Delegitimization of Jewish people, and Jewish religion and clear Double standard applied to Jews for centuries in different countries of the world -were three main tools used by antisemites. Whenever there is Demonization of the Jewish State or Delegitimization – denial of its right to exist, or Double standard applied to Israel, which is not applied to any country in the world – should be

considered as new antisemitism. Exactly, like watching a three-D movie. You cannot understand what you see without putting on the three-D glasses. I proposed to use the three-D principle in order to identify new antisemitism among the criticism of Israel. Using these glasses, we would clearly see a double standard applied to Israel, the only democracy in the Middle East, when it is condemned by the UN for violations of human rights more than all the dictatorships in the world together. We'd see the Demonization of Israel, when it is called a Nazi state, and building a barrier against terrorists is called apartheid. We would see a Delegitimization of Israel while its right to exist is denied.

In 2016 The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance adopted the antisemitism definition, which soon became internationally recognized. This definition shows when criticism of Israel turns into antisemitism through 13 specific case studies that clearly show why Demonization, Double standard, and Delegitimization of Israel are antisemitism. It is the only definition that makes the connection between old and new antisemitism. 39 states and a wide range of

organizations, have adopted or endorsed the IHRA working definition of antisemitism.

Very clear examples show how demonization, delegitimization, and double standard lead to antisemitism.

Here are a few of them:

- Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.
- Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor.
- Applying double standards by requiring of it a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.
- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.

CAM – Combat Antisemitism Movement, which Advisory Board I Chair, monitors all contemporary manifestations of Jew-hatred, as delineated by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism, and committed to getting as many organizations as possible to adopt this definition.

Over the 20 years, I have visited about 100 American campuses, where I have clearly seen how the new antisemitism is creating a very difficult environment for Jewish students who consider themselves Zionists. There is much evidence of how the growing attacks on the Jews are encouraged, developed and reinforced by the attacks on Israel, like colonial white racism. Much like in Soviet times, antisemitic attacks on Israel are weakening the sense of security of Jewish students at American universities. And attacks on Jews are often accompanied by anti-Israeli slogans. It is impossible today to analyze the growth of antisemitism without seeing that these phenomena are very closely linked. That is why there must be one explanation linking the

demonization of the Jews, the double standard towards the Jews, the denial of the Jews as a nation with the demonization of the State of Israel, the double standard towards the State of Israel and the denial of Israel's right to exist.

There can be no success in the fight against antisemitism if we do not fight it on all fronts. Therefore, the exact definition of antisemitism is crucial.

It is very important that the US administration adheres to this definition of antisemitism in its policy.