

Ministers and Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen. It is a great pleasure for me to be here representing President Bush and the people of the United States.

Chairman Passy, let me thank you for your leadership in planning and organizing this important conference on anti-Semitism. I also wish to extend my sincere appreciation to the German Government and to my good friend Joschka Fischer for hosting our gathering and for taking a strong stand against this age-old yet active and evolving form of intolerance. And let me take this occasion to honor President Rau, not just for opening the conference, but also for his leadership against anti-Semitism and on so many other compelling moral issues during his 52 years of distinguished public service to Germany and to the world.

Berlin is a fitting backdrop for our meeting. The firestorm of anti-Semitic hatred that was the Holocaust was set here in Berlin. The Holocaust was no ordinary conflagration, but a colossal act of arson, unprecedented in scale with the annihilation of a people as its purpose. Six million Jews and millions of other men, women and children perished in the flames of fascism. European civilization as we thought we knew it was rent asunder.

Yet, it was also here in Berlin that a new, democratic Germany rose from the ashes of the Second World War. And in this city, a new Europe, whole and free, was born after the fall of that other great tyranny of the 20th century: communism.

Now, in the opening decade of the 21st century, we, 55 democratic nations of Europe, Eurasia and America, have come to Berlin to stamp out the new fires of anti-Semitism within our societies, and to kindle lights of tolerance so that future generations will never know the unspeakable horrors that hatred can unleash.

When President Bush visited the Auschwitz death camp last year he renewed the United States' commitment to oppose anti-Semitism with these words: "This site is a sobering reminder that when we find anti-Semitism, whether it be in Europe, in America or anywhere else, mankind must come together to fight such dark impulses."

Today, we confront the ugly reality that anti-Semitism is not just a fact of history, but a current event.

At a planning session for this conference, Benjamin Meed, the President of the American Gathering of Holocaust Survivors, said "Sixty years after the Holocaust I never thought that I would be invited to a meeting on anti-Semitism in Europe." Indeed.

We are appalled that in recent years the incidence of anti-Semitic hate crimes has been on the increase within our community of democratic nations. All of us recognize that we must take decisive measures to reverse this disturbing trend.

Our states must work together with non-governmental organizations, religious leaders and other respected figures within our societies to combat anti-Semitism by word and deed. We need to work in close partnership to create a culture of social tolerance and civic courage, in which anti-Semitism and other forms of racial and religious hatred are met with the active resistance of our citizens, authorities and political leaders.

We must send the clear message far and wide that anti-Semitism is always wrong and it is always dangerous.

We must send the clear message that anti-Semitic hate crimes are exactly that: crimes, and that these crimes will be aggressively prosecuted.

We must not permit anti-Semitic crimes to be shrugged off as inevitable side effects of inter-ethnic conflicts. Political disagreements do not justify physical assaults

against Jews in our streets, the destruction of Jewish schools, or the desecration of synagogues and cemeteries. There is no justification for anti-Semitism.

It is not anti-Semitic to criticize the policies of the state of Israel. But the line is crossed when Israel or its leaders are demonized or vilified, for example by the use of Nazi symbols and racist caricatures.

We must send the clear message to extremists of the political right and the political left alike that all those who use hate as a rallying cry dishonor themselves and dishonor their cause in the process.

Regrettably, my country has its share of anti-Semites and skinheads and other assorted racists, bigots and extremists, who feed on fear and ignorance and prey on the vulnerable.

As a nation of many united as one, we are determined to speak out and take action at home and abroad against anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance and to promote the rights of persons belonging to minorities. As President Bush has said: "America stands for the non-negotiable demands of human dignity."

Fortunately the overwhelming majority of Americans are repelled by these hate-mongers and reject their vicious ways, their vicious views, their vicious attitudes. Overwhelmingly the American people embrace diversity as a national asset and tolerance is embraced as a civic virtue. Our laws and our leaders reflect those enlightened sentiments.

Not only do we believe that combating hatred is the right thing to do, we think that promoting tolerance is essential to building a democratic, prosperous and peaceful world. Hatred is a destroyer, not a builder. People consumed by hate cannot construct a better future for themselves or for their children.

So much of the misery and instability around the world today is caused or exacerbated by ethnic and religious intolerance, whether it's central Africa or the Middle East, Northern Ireland or Cyprus, Kosovo or Darfur. The distance from prejudice to violence, intolerance to atrocity, can be perilously short. The lessons of the Holocaust are timeless and urgent. In this new century, it is more important than ever for our leaders and citizens to counter anti-Semitism and other forms of hatred whenever and wherever they meet them.

It is especially important that we instill in our children values and behaviors that can avert new calamities. The sixteen-nation Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research has done a great deal already to increase understanding among young people of the Holocaust and its enduring lessons. And we welcome the growing interest on the part of other countries to join that Task Force.

Tolerance, like hatred, is a learned behavior passed from one generation to the next unless the new generation is educated differently. Let tolerance be our legacy. May future generations of schoolchildren read that in the early decades of the 21st century, mankind finally consigned anti-Semitism to history, never to darken the world again.

The United States delegation, led by former New York City Mayor Ed Koch, is here to listen. They're here to learn and to share best practices against anti-Semitism. We will have the benefit of Mayor Koch's direct experience dealing with hate crimes in the world's most ethnically diverse metropolis in my hometown, New York City. Our delegation also draws expertise from Members of our Congress and from close partnership with non-governmental leaders doing pioneering work in the tolerance field.

The exchange of insights and ideas among our delegations here in Berlin should form a solid basis for practical action by each of our

nations. There is much yet that we can do in key areas of law enforcement, legislation and education to follow up on the decisions we took last December in Maastricht.

That's why I'm pleased that last week the Permanent Council of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe committed all of our 55 states to take further concrete actions against anti-Semitism. The OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in Warsaw will play a central role. This office now has a clear mandate to work with member states to collect hate crimes statistics, to track anti-Semitic incidents and to report publicly on these matters. The office also will help states develop national legislation against hate crimes and promote tolerance through education. And I know that in the course of your deliberations here other ideas will arise as to how we can put action behind our words, and whether we have institutionalized these actions in a proper way.

So, my friends, here in Berlin, the 55 democratic nations of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe have come together and will stand together and we will declare with one voice: "Anti-Semitism shall have no place among us. Hate shall find no home within a Europe whole, free and at peace." Thank you, Mr. Moderator.

UPON RETIREMENT OF DR.
RONALD L. FEIST

HON. JOHN T. DOOLITTLE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 12, 2004

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Speaker, today I wish to express warm thanks, congratulations, and best wishes to Dr. Ronald L. Feist upon his retirement as the superintendent of the Eureka Union School District, in Placer County, CA. Ron has done an outstanding job and deserves the appreciation of students, parents, and the general public in the community he has served so well for 22 years.

Ron grew up on a farm in Minnesota, where almost no one in his family had previously attended college and most only completed the eighth grade before turning to farming. However, following the example and encouragement of many fine teachers and coaches, Ron opted to set a new precedent for his family by accepting an academic scholarship and competing in basketball at the college level.

In 1965, Ron earned a bachelor of arts degree in Chemistry/Physics from Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota. Four years later, he completed a master of arts degree in the same field from Fisk University in Nashville, TN. Subsequently, he earned an Administrative Credential from California State University, Fullerton, in 1972 and a Doctorate of Education in Education Administration from Nova University in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, in 1978.

Ron stayed the course by becoming a coach and science teacher himself, first in his native State, then in Glendora, CA, before accepting administrative duties at Pamona Unified School District and Napa Valley School District. Then in 1977, he came to South Placer County as the principal of Oakmont High School.

In 1982, Ron launched his 22-year tenure as the superintendent of the Eureka Union School District. When he took over, the district

had only two and a half schools, 1,100 students, and negative finances. Today, as a result of his leadership, it boasts nine highly acclaimed schools, 4,250 students, and a sound financial condition, despite the difficult challenges facing state and local governments in California. Moreover, student achievement, as measured in test scores and parent satisfaction, is very high. I think it is also remarkable to note that, while heading such a successful district, Ron continued to teach school finance and law part-time at the University of LaVerne from 1988 through 2001.

Mr. Speaker, several prestigious honors have highlighted Dr. Feist's 38-year career as an educator. For example, he was the Napa County Teacher of the Year in 1974–75; in 1988, he was named the Placer County Distinguished School Administrator; in 1990–91, he was recognized as the Placer County Administrator of the Year; and in 2001–02, he was named Region 2 Superintendent of the Year. He also received the Napa Parent Teacher Association Distinguished Service Award in 1977 and the Oakmont Parents Club Outstanding Service Award in 1980.

Ron functions as the vice president of the Nevada/Placer County School Insurance Board and on the Placer/Nevada County Special Education Executive Committee. Additionally, he represented ten counties in Northern California for two years on the State Superintendency Committee of the Association of California School Administrators.

Mr. Speaker, beyond his role with the school district, Ron has been an invaluable member of the local community, having served on many boards and committees. He is the past president of the Granite Bay Chamber of Commerce, Roseville and Granite Bay Kiwanis Clubs, and Sierra Family Services, as well as past chairman of the Granite Bay Municipal Advisory Committee.

However, despite all the acclaim he has received professionally and civically, Ron's great-

est success has occurred in the home. He and his wife of 42 years, Diane, raised three children Troy, Amy, and Heidi. In retirement, Ron looks forward to spending more time with his family, especially his nine grandchildren—Alexa, Hunter, Bryce, Jordan, Brennan, Hannah, Whitney, Devin, and Baron.

Ron will also have more time now to dedicate to his many interests, including golf, traveling, reading, cardio-training, and weight lifting. Nevertheless, it will be hard to keep him away from public education completely. He plans to do some consulting for school districts in the areas of finance and facilities.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the many people whom he has touched over the years, I thank Dr. Ron Feist for his service and wish him well in his future endeavors.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JEFF FLAKE

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 12, 2004

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Speaker, today I voted “no” on final passage of H.R. 4280, the Help Efficient, Accessible, Low Cost, Timely Healthcare (HEALTH) Act of 2004.

This is not the first time I have had to make this difficult vote. On March 13, 2003, I voted against H.R. 5, which contained nearly identical language to H.R. 2480. Both in 2003 and today, I have heard arguments as to why the Federal Government should act and why this proposed reform is badly needed. Hearing these arguments on many occasions has not made it any less difficult to vote against this bill, but I am not convinced that the Federal Government should preempt State law in this area.

Those supporting this bill have made some compelling arguments as to why Congress

should step in and institute these reforms. They cite the national nature of insurance plans, whereby a doctor in Arizona might have to pay more for malpractice insurance due to an over-the-top jury award in Florida. They also note that, as doctors close up shop or stop providing high-risk care in specialties such as emergency medicine and obstetrics and gynecology, patients are forced to cross State lines in order to seek out treatment. We have all watched with dismay as hospitals have been forced to shut their doors and doctors have opted to treat patients without malpractice insurance due to the high costs of premiums. Certainly, the trial attorneys who line their pockets with egregious fees aren't suffering as a result of the mess they've made with unscrupulous lawsuits. These arguments only underscore an already evident need for the States to pursue medical malpractice reforms. However, as one who believes firmly in federalism, I am wary of supporting legislation that would, in effect, preempt other States' constitutions.

For example, California instituted real medical malpractice reform 25 years ago, which H.R. 4280 seeks to emulate. However, if the final version of H.R. 4280 differs from California's reform, then their system may ultimately be usurped by the new Federal authority created by this legislation. Punishing California's sensible reforms would be a terrible outcome.

The natural evolution of health care delivery suggest that a Federal solution such as H.R. 4280 may one day be necessary. But right now it's up to the States to begin that process, and I am already a part of those efforts in Arizona. The States should follow California's example, which has been an undeniable success over the past 25 years.