

December 2011

From the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism (SEAS)

# The SEAS Monitor

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! I hope you are well. This issue of “The SEAS Monitor” covers my activities during the month of December. The Monitor is a way for me to keep you informed about my work as the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat anti-Semitism. Please click here for [previous copies](#).

Please enjoy and keep in touch.

Warm regards,  
Hannah



[www.state.gov/g/drl/seas/](http://www.state.gov/g/drl/seas/)



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## INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH:

### URUGUAY



I had the pleasure of visiting Montevideo, Uruguay and speaking at the **B'nai B'rith International Policy Conference December 4-5**. Addressing the conference about efforts to delegitimize Israel, global anti-Semitism, and Iran's infiltration into Latin America were former Chilean President Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle, Vice-Prime Minister of Israel Moshe Ya'alon, and former U.S. Ambassador to Uruguay Frank Baxter. I also met with Uruguayan government officials, youth, and the Jewish and interfaith communities on December 5-6.



*Addressing the B'nai B'rith Conference*

Following the conference, I met with Federico Perazza, Director, and Dianele Pi, Deputy Director, of the **Uruguayan Ministry of Foreign Affairs'** Human Rights Bureau. In addition to discussing how combating anti-Semitism fits into Uruguay's international human rights agenda, their potential impact as chair of the UN Human Rights Committee, and the [2011 Hours Against Hate campaign](#), we also discussed the July 2011 public denial of the Holocaust made by Hojjatollah Soltani, Iranian Ambassador to Uruguay. The Uruguayan Government strongly condemned the Iranian official's statements, which was an important step in making sure we teach our children accurate history and do not teach them to hate. Further statements condemning hate – from Iran or elsewhere – are necessary if we want to promote tolerance, pluralism, acceptance and mutual respect.



One of the most personally rewarding portions of any trip for me is meeting with youth. I met with eighteen teenage students, one from each department of Uruguay's interior, who serve as "[Youth Correspondents](#)" for the press office of the U.S. Embassy in Montevideo. I invited them to include anti-Semitic incidents in their blogs, discussed the role of youth and social media in spreading the message of tolerance, and talked about the *2011 Hours Against Hate* campaign and its success to date.

The Comité Central Israelita del Uruguay (in English, the Central Jewish Committee of Uruguay) represents local community organizations in Montevideo and the rural provinces of Paysandu and Maldonado. At our meeting, we discussed the issues of adapting the public education curriculum to incorporate lessons on the Holocaust and anti-Semitism and improving the efficiency of the Honorary Commission to Combat Racism, Xenophobia and all Forms of Discrimination.



*At the Yavne School*

In addition to meeting with the Central Jewish Committee, I was able to visit a Jewish school. The Director of the Yavne School, Lilian Wieznia, gave me an overview of Jewish education in Montevideo and we visited a class. Yavne School is one of the two largest private Jewish schools in Montevideo.

I was interviewed by reporter Guillermo Drapper of the *Busqueda* newspaper on December 6 about my overall visit and my views on anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial in Uruguay and the region. The article, in Spanish, can be found [here](#).

Rounding out my visit to Montevideo, U.S. Chargé d'Affaires ad interim Thomas H. Lloyd hosted a diverse group of Uruguayan religious and human rights leaders at the Chief of Mission Residence. We discussed ideas for combating anti-Semitism and intolerance.



*At the interfaith gathering*



*With leaders of the Comite Central  
Israelita del Uruguay*

## **MEDIA:**

### **ALHURRA PRESENTS**

As a follow-up to my appearance on “Alhurra Presents,” an interactive program with prominent newsmakers on Middle East affairs with Sam Menassa (You can find the interview here:

<http://www.alhurra.com/ondemand/player/alhurrapresents/player.html>

and mentioned in the October *Monitor*, I was interviewed by Rob Satloff on December 9. The focus this time was on how to deal with anti-Semitism and Islamophobia around the world and the *2011 Hours Against Hate* campaign.

## **DOMESTIC OUTREACH:**

### **POLISH-JEWISH DIALOG**

I provided the afternoon keynote address at the *Polish-Jewish Dialog: A New Opening* conference at Georgetown University on December 7. The conference aimed to reassess both perceptions and stereotypes prevalent historically between the Polish and Jewish communities. The event was co-sponsored by Lazarski University of Warsaw, Poland and the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## **Helsinki Commission Hearing**

On December 2, I testified before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (the U.S. Helsinki Commission) on Anti-Semitism in Europe, chaired by Congressman Chris Smith. Joining me on the panel was Rabbi Andy Baker, Personal Representative of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Anti-Semitism. Representatives from five Jewish organizations were on the second panel. Congressman Smith expressed concern that we are on the brink of significant worsening of anti-Semitism. Click [here](#) to read my testimony or copy and paste the Internet address into your browser:  
<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/rm/2011/178164.htm>.

## **AT THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE:**

### **U.S. Ambassador to Hungary**

I met with U.S. Ambassador to Hungary Eleni Tsakopoulos Kounalakis on December 1 to discuss the situation in Hungary. We discussed working with the Hungarian government to combat anti-Semitism, including our Centropa grant for Holocaust education in Hungary. We addressed the Raoul Wallenberg centennial anniversary, discussed future Hungarian restitution payments and the new religion law, and spoke of the rise of right-wing political parties.

### **Members of the Argentinean Jewish Community**

In early December, members of my team met with Ariel Blufstein and Ezequiel Herszage of the Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas (DAIA) -- the umbrella organization of Argentina's Jewish community -- and also representatives of the international Conservative (Jewish) movement. We learned about the recent study on anti-Semitism in Argentina (the report, in Spanish, can be found at [daia.org.ar](http://daia.org.ar)) and discussed the need for improved education to combat general ignorance about Judaism and anti-Semitism there. Related to this are recent problems with the security of the Jewish community in Argentina, where personal attacks as well as desecration of

Jewish schools and cemeteries have occurred. I look forward to raising awareness of the anti-Semitism study in Argentina and assisting the community with their education efforts.

### **World Organization of Libyan Jews**

I met with David Gerbi, international director of the World Organization of Libyan Jews, on December 12. The Jews left Libya shortly before Quaddafi came to power in the late 1960s. Today, they number about 200,000 worldwide, with the majority in Israel and a community in Rome, with a very small presence in the U.S., UK and South Africa. Dr. Gerbi, who has travelled to Libya a few times, recently went to Tripoli to see about repairing the synagogue there, and his life was threatened by those pretending to welcome him. I support his efforts to restore historical Jewish sites in Libya.

### **Abraham's Vision**

Also on December 12, I met with Huda Abu Arquob, Co-Executive Director of Abraham's Vision, a Bay Area organization that teaches tolerance through a program which brings Jews and Muslims together to overcome stereotypes and learn about each other's faiths and cultures.

### **Istanbul Process for Combating Intolerance and Discrimination**

UnderSecretary for Global Affairs, Maria Otero, and Ambassador for International Religious Freedom, Suzan Johnson Cook, convened experts from 30 countries and international organizations on December 12-14 to discuss best practices for engaging religious minorities, training government officials on religious and cultural awareness, and enforcing laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of religion or belief.

The United States believes that freedom of religion and freedom of expression are vital to every nation and critical in maintaining stability and promoting economic prosperity. "The Istanbul Process" acts on that belief by providing a forum to implement U.N. Human Rights Council Resolution 16/18, which calls for specific steps to combat intolerance, discrimination, and violence on the

basis of religion or belief, while also protecting freedom of speech and religion.

Click [here](#) to see the story on Humanrights.gov or copy and paste the Internet address into your browser:

<http://www.humanrights.gov/2011/12/10/istanbul-process/>

Ambassador At Large for International Religious Freedom Suzan Johnson Cook addressed the conference. Click [here](#) to watch the video of the Ambassador's remarks or copy and paste the Internet address into your browser: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YpHMiYSn5iU>

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton closed the conference. Click [here](#) to read the transcript and watch the video of the Secretary's closing remarks or copy and paste the Internet address into your browser:

<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2011/12/178866.htm>



*Secretary Clinton closes the conference*

### **Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Awards Ceremony**

The hard work of my team was recognized on December 19 with a **Franklin Award**. The citation reads: “For outstanding teamwork, dedication, and innovation in combating and monitoring anti-Semitism and promoting human rights, religious freedom and mutual respect in support of the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism.” Great job team SEAS!



An Individual **Superior Honor Award** was presented to Anne Derse, U.S. Ambassador to Lithuania to recognize her work with the government of Lithuania to combat anti-Semitism. The citation reads: “For outstanding work to monitor and combat anti-Semitism in Lithuania and to promote inter-ethnic and inter-religious partnerships.”



*Special Envoy Rosenthal,  
Ambassador Derse, and  
Assistant Secretary Michael  
Posner*

### **Our Newest Team Member**

Debra Eichenbaum, a newly minted Boston College Law School graduate, where she participated on the National Religious Freedom Moot Court team, joined my team in November as a Presidential Management Fellow. A former staff member at the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, Debra worked on issues of international religious freedom and launched the Union of Reform Judaism’s Muslim-Jewish Dialogue program with the Islamic Society of North America. Welcome!

### **EVENTS:**

#### **UNESCO dinner**

Esther Coopersmith hosted a dinner on December 14 honoring UNESCO Director General Irina Bukova. UNESCO-funded scientists, artists and non-governmental organizations were part of the conversation about the future of UNESCO and the U.S. funding cut after UNESCO recognized the Palestinian Authority as a state.

### **LINKS OF INTEREST:**

#### **Secretary Clinton at the Tolerance Center in Vilnius**

Secretary Clinton delivered remarks on December 6 at a meeting with civil society groups at the Tolerance Center in Vilnius, Lithuania while she was

attending a Ministerial meeting of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. The International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania created the Tolerance Education Network by establishing 77 Tolerance Education Centers in the secondary schools, NGOs and museums in Lithuania to educate students, teachers and local communities. Click [here](#) to read the remarks or copy and paste the Internet address into your browser:  
<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2011/12/178313.htm>.

### **President Obama at the 71st General Assembly of the Union for Reform Judaism**

On Friday, December 16 President Obama delivered a speech at the 71st General Assembly of the Union for Reform Judaism. Click [here](#) to watch the video of the President's remarks and [here](#) to read the transcript or copy and paste the Internet address into your browser:  
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/video/2011/12/16/president-obama-speaks-71st-general-assembly-union-reform-judaism>.



*President Obama addressing the URJ*



### **2010 Anti-Semitism Compendium**

We have compiled a compendium of anti-Semitic incidents in 2010 drawing from the *2010 Human Rights Report* and *January to June* and *July to December*

*International Religious Freedom Reports*. The compendium also includes a short year in review of my activities, including outreach events and photos. Click [here](#) to see the report or copy and paste the Internet address into your browser: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/176742.htm>.

## **INTERNET OUTREACH:**

### **Facebook**

Please “Like” my page on Facebook: “Hannah Rosenthal, Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat anti-Semitism.” When you “Like” my page, you will begin to see updates to my Facebook page on your News Feed.

Be sure to follow our weekly posting entitled “Here’s What We’re Hearing: Anti-Semitism News Updates.” It is through these updates that we monitor global incidents around of anti-Semitism. Our “Jewish World News Updates” contains positive efforts to promote tolerance and inter-religious cooperation.

### **Instructions:**

Once you are signed into Facebook, search for my name and title: Hannah Rosenthal, Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat anti-Semitism. The “Like” button is at the top of my page and has a thumbs-up symbol. The symbol disappears once you have “Liked” the page.


### **State.gov**

Aside from following me on Facebook, I encourage all of you to visit my page on the Department of State’s website. You can quickly find my page by clicking [here](#). Or you can follow these instructions: Begin by going to the Department of State’s homepage: [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov). Then, please click on the “Democracy and Global Affairs” tab in the white toolbar. Then, please click on “Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL),” and then click on “Monitoring and Combating Anti-Semitism” in the left vertical column. Here you will information about my office, as well as remarks, press releases, past issues of *The Monitor*, photos, and information about the *2011 Hours Against Hate* campaign.

## [HumanRights.gov](https://www.humanrights.gov/)

I also encourage you to visit HumanRights.gov, which is the US government's official website for human rights related information. You can access the homepage [here](#), and you can access my personal page [here](#).

## [Twitter](#)

Please also follow me on twitter! You can find me at:  [@HannahAtState](https://twitter.com/HannahAtState).