

REMARKS BY AMBASSADOR WALTER F. MONDALE

OPENING RECEPTION

"COURAGE TO REMEMBER" EXHIBIT

MAY 9, 1994

RABBI COOPER, MR. HAGIYA, MR. AMIHAI, MRS. SUGIHARA . . . I AM HONORED TO JOIN YOU FOR THE OPENING OF THIS VERY IMPORTANT AND SPECIAL EXHIBIT.

I WISH TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE LEADERSHIP OF SOKA UNIVERSITY, THE SIMON WIESENTHAL CENTER AND THE TOKYO CITY GOVERNMENT — AS WELL AS THE MANY CO-SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS — FOR MAKING THIS EVENT POSSIBLE.

THE SUBJECT OF THIS EXHIBIT IS, OF COURSE, A VERY SAD AND TRAGIC HISTORY — THE UNCONSCIONABLE HORROR OF THE HOLOCAUST AND WHAT IT SAYS ABOUT HUMANITY'S CAPACITY FOR INHUMANITY. THIS GENOCIDAL CAMPAIGN TO EXTERMINATE A WHOLE PEOPLE IS SOMETHING WHICH WE MUST NEVER FORGET.

THE "COURAGE TO REMEMBER" IS INSPIRED, ABOVE ALL, BY THE HOPE THAT KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THESE ATROCITIES CAN AWAKEN OUR SPIRITS AND STRENGTHEN OUR RESOLVE TO FIGHT HATRED, BIGOTRY AND VIOLENCE WHEREVER WE MAY FIND IT.

AND THIS IS OBVIOUSLY A CHALLENGE THAT CONTINUES TO BE VERY MUCH WITH US IN THE WORLD TODAY.

ON A DAILY BASIS, WE ARE REMINDED OF IT. WHETHER IN BOSNIA . . . OR RWANDA . . . OR HAITI . . . OR IN OUR OWN NATIONS AND COMMUNITIES, WE CAN SEE THE AWFUL PERSISTENCE OF HATRED, INTOLERANCE, AND BRUTALITY.

THIS EXHIBIT IS, THEREFORE, A TIMELY REMINDER OF OUR FUNDAMENTAL DUTY TO PROTECT HUMAN DIGNITY AND DEFEND HUMAN LIFE.

IT IS A SUMMONS TO EACH OF US TO RECOGNIZE THE COMMON HUMANITY SHARED BY ALL PEOPLE OF ALL RACES, ALL RELIGIONS, AND ALL NATIONS. OUR BEST HOPE FOR THE FUTURE LIES IN THIS RECOGNITION OF OUR UNIVERSAL HUMANITY.

AND I WISH TO ADD THAT THERE IS GOOD REASON FOR US TO HAVE HOPE. ENEMIES CAN BECOME FRIENDS; PEOPLE CAN LEARN TO LIVE WITH ONE ANOTHER AND RESOLVE DIFFERENCES PEACEABLY.

FOR EVIDENCE, WE NEED ONLY LOOK TO THE RECENT ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PEACE ACCORDS OR THE AMAZING EVENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA. I AM SURE MANY OF YOU SAW THE JOYFUL EVENT ON TELEVISION LAST NIGHT AS THE SOUTH AFRICAN PARLIAMENT ELECTED NELSON MANDELA TO BE THE NEW PRESIDENT.

THIS IS THE MAGNIFICENT POWER THAT CAN COME FROM THE COURAGE TO REMEMBER OUR UNIVERSAL HUMANITY AND OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO RESPECT HUMAN DIGNITY. AND IT IS THIS HOPE WHICH WE MUST RETRIEVE FROM THE TERRIBLE CRIMES OF THE HOLOCAUST. (WE CAN GAIN HOPE AS WELL FROM THE COURAGEOUS ACTS OF INDIVIDUALS LIKE MR. SUGIHARA, WHO WERE WILLING TO RISK THEIR OWN LIVES IN ORDER TO SAVE THE LIVES OF MANY OTHERS.)

ON BEHALF OF PRESIDENT CLINTON AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, I WISH TO SAY HOW PROUD WE ARE THAT THE UNITED STATES IS HOME TO THE SIMON WIESENTHAL CENTER AND TO THE MUSEUM OF TOLERANCE.

AGAIN, I WISH TO THANK SOKA UNIVERSITY AND THE CITY OF TOKYO FOR YOUR LEADERSHIP IN BRINGING THIS IMPORTANT EXHIBIT TO JAPAN — AND FOR YOUR OWN "COURAGE TO REMEMBER."



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