



Max M. Kampelman Papers

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M. M. Kampelman

REMARKS BY MAX M. KAMPELMAN AT
ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE LUNCHEON,
SATURDAY, MAY 30, 1981,

GRAND HYATT HOTEL, NEW YORK CITY

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you very much for your gracious introduction. It was a model of clarity, unusual perception, accurate analysis and it proves you to be an excellent judge of character.

I welcome the opportunity to say a few words at this well-deserved tribute luncheon for Geri Joseph. Geri, Burton and I go back together over many years. We were friends, independently, before their marriage. Indeed, I remember one evening driving Geri in my old Hudson to meet Burton. I don't know and can never prove it, but I choose to believe that it was that evening that led to their decision to marry and to the further development of this extraordinary I. S. Joseph Family and its fine traditions.

My continued close relationship with this partnership of Burton and Geri Joseph has been one of the most rewarding and enriching friendships of my life.

Geri and I met while she was still on campus, serving, I believe, as managing editor of the Minnesota Daily and making her mark as a superb student. We continued our friendship through an endless web of common acquaintances and relationships. With ever growing pride, I saw her develop into an accomplished journalist; broadening her interests into wider social issues; and then active politics and community leadership.

Many of us were present at the White House when Geri took the oath of office in the presence of the President and the Vice

President of the United States. When I witnessed that beautiful scene and this beautiful lady becoming an official diplomat, I thought of the absolute irrelevance of that old bromide that "diplomacy is one part protocol, one part alcohol, and one part Geritol." Let me say to all of you that whatever our expectations for Geri, her ability to fulfill her responsibilities far exceeded those expectations. Without doubt she became one of the most respected and successful Ambassadors that we had any place in the world. I know that it is easy to exaggerate with words and this conclusion may well sound to some as an exaggeration and as a reflection of my own bias. Let me, however, say to you that this conclusion was reached not by me on the basis of my limited experience, but was a conclusion shared by the Secretaries of State of this and the last Administration and by professionals in the Department of State who do not particularly entertain the thought that non-careerists have a role in diplomacy. In fact, in a discussion on Wednesday with Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, Lawrence Eagleburger, his conclusion was that she was "the best".

Friends, we all know that Geri is "the best" - and we know that she is ours.

Friends, I have not until now referred to the fine honor you have bestowed upon me today. I accept your tribute with some embarrassment and with deep appreciation. In responding to it, I would like to share a few vignettes of Madrid events, some indelible memories that crossed my mind.

There was initial consternation in the State Department when we learned that the President decided to surround our delegation to Madrid with 30 public members. How would we keep

them busy? What difficulties would they cause us? But it is not the difficulties that I remembered. What I do remember is the solid supportive presence behind me at our Ukranian-American delegate, Polish-American, Lithunian-American, Lutheran Minister - Americans all - listening with pride and wrapt attention to an extraordinarily eloquent statement by the Belgium delegate on Soviet anti-semitism, with the Soviets sputtering in disbelief.

The presence of the public members during the first part of our meetings proved to be of major symbolic and real value. And I will long remember with gratitude that Ben Epstein was among the Presidential appointed public members.

I would walk into a coffee shop and there would be Ben and Ethel talking to a newly arrived public member. They thought she might be lonely or feel strange.

I would attend a meeting in Madrid and there would be Ben and Ethel, developing relationships with the Madrid Jewish community.

I would be worried about a development in Basket 3 and there would be Ben and Ethel listening avidly to every word and then giving me their frank evaluations at an appropriate moment.

I would walk into the American Embassy and there would be Ben and Ethel, heading for the recording room where Ben was planning to make a series of tapes to send back for broadcast in the United States.

They were everywhere. They helped to lift occasional sagging spirits of a hard-working staff. They were at work selling our point of view to other delegates. And always, it was Ben's judgment, his warmth, his support, his friendship.

Thank you, Ben.

When I in later years think back upon Madrid, I will also think of a speech I made on February 11th. It dealt with the awesome growth of Soviet military power. At the conclusion of our meeting that day, a leading diplomat from a Warsaw Pact country came up to me and quietly said: "Thank you very much. I did not know any of that." I will remember that.

I will remember a speech in October in which I quoted Soviet and Eastern European statements by their diplomats immediately after Belgrade which completely contradicted that which they were telling us right there in Madrid. At the conclusion of that session, I went over to one Eastern European colleague and said: "I had one more quotation that I left out." He looked at me, took my hand and then whispered: "Thank you very much, my good friend." My birthday was a few days later; and in my hotel room that day was a case of wine from his country.

I will remember a long evening dinner with the Chief of the Soviet delegation, a Deputy Foreign Minister, a 75 year old former editor of Pravda and Izvestia. In the midst of that discussion, he began to express a thought, it turned into an uninterrupted statement in Russian that lasted for an hour and ten minutes without even a moment set aside for interpretation into English. I will remember his poor interpreter scribbling away madly and then at the conclusion of that statement having to translate it into English for me. And I remember the gratitude in the eyes of that Soviet interpreter when I said that this kind of speechmaking had to stop at these private discussions - they were unfair to the working translations.

I will long remember a breakfast I arranged for a visiting Congressional group with the Soviet delegation, a meeting that lasted for 2-1/2 hours, as one Member of Congress, a Catholic Priest wearing his collar, talked with vehemence about Scharansky and Soviet Jewry.

And I will remember intense conversation with Avital Scharansky in our Delegate's Lounge where others could see her - and a tearful exchange with Ida Nudel's sister from Israel as I promised to mention her sister's name.

I will remember a rather sharp attack by me against a specific Soviet policy as formulated in a speech by Brezhnev. Just prior to taking the floor, I learned that my Soviet counterpart was the next day going to celebrate his 75th birthday. I, herefore, began my talk with personal congratulations to him on his birthday. At the end of my talk, I referred to that Brezhnev statement as "an empty gesture" and not a meaningful concession. When my Soviet counterpart responded to my intervention, he said he found it difficult to take issue with my substantive comments because he felt touched by my personal birthday greeting, but he wanted to assure me that I had misunderstood the Brezhnev speech and that it was, in fact, a meaningful gesture. The next day I sent him a box of cigars - not Cuban - and wrote on the card "Birthday Greetings - and this is not an empty gesture." The word spread at our meeting. It did not hurt us.

There are so many experiences to remember. Thank you for your patience in permitting me to share a portion of them with you this afternoon. They will explain why I don't look upon my extended service in Madrid with any sense other than a sense

of gratitude at the opportunity to serve and a sense of personal satisfaction at the opportunity to continue to grow and stretch.

When Ben Epstein told me to anticipate responding to you today by taking 10 or 15 minutes of your time, I knew that I could not in that period adequately convey the substance of what is transpiring in Madrid. I do not, however, want to sit down today without at least taking a moment or two to talk about its meaning.

Our conference is one on cooperation and security in Europe. All the countries of Europe, but Albania, are part of it, plus the United States and Canada. Our active participation and leadership in this European conference is absolutely essential for democracy and for our own national interest as well as for peace.

Europe must regain its sense of its own past and its confidence about its future. Europe has a larger population, a larger gross national product, a larger per capita income and greater resources in raw materials and steel than the Soviet Union. It must realize and mobilize its own strength. The extent to which we can help achieve its own strength. The extent to which we can help it achieve this self-realization do we help ourselves.

We, here in the United States, as well as people in Europe and all over the world, have lived under an illusion, that our relationship with the Soviet Union was characterized by a relaxation of tensions, by an agreement to cooperate, by a new era of "detente" which was to replace the cold war.

Our definition of "detente" was an illusion. Within a few months after the 1973 Brezhnev-Nixon communique, the Soviet Union supported the Arab assault on Israel which violated the communique's agreement that neither of our countries would take unilateral action to prejudice the interests of the other.

We thought we were in "detente", but this did not stop the Soviets in 1975 after the Paris agreements from supporting Hanoi's efforts to take over South Vietnam militarily; or in 1976 to arrange for a Cuban take-over of Angola; or in 1977 to encourage Vietnam to move into Cambodia; or in 1978 to make it possible for North Yemen to go into South Yemen; or in 1979 to establish a Communist regime in Ethiopia; or in 1980 to invade Afghanistan; or in 1981 to keep providing, directly and indirectly, guns and ammunition and political subversion in Central America.

To restore Europe's confidence in itself and to realize its own strength, it is essential that this truth about "detente" be communicated and discussed and finally understood. The Madrid meeting has given us that opportunity.

The free world must all come to understand that if a nation values anything more than freedom, it will lose that freedom; and the irony of it is that if it is comfort, or trade, or security that it values more, it will lose those too.

And Madrid has given the western world an opportunity to reassert once again, over and over again, that the common bond that unites all of the peoples of the world and their aspirations - aspirations to human rights, a commitment to the human rights of the individual.

We had every right to ask and we continue to ask in Madrid, as we address ourselves to the Soviet Union: "How can we believe the new agreements you wish us to enter into with you, if you do not live up to your old agreements?" Theory and practice conspire to prove that if we are to build an international order it must be based on trust. The Soviets made commitments to human rights and there can be no trust in other agreements unless they live up to the commitments they made.

Our message to the Soviet world must reflect a genuine zeal for the rights of mankind, a dedication that must glow in every sentence we utter to them. And that is the message which the western world is delivering to the Soviet Union in Madrid.

The question is often asked of me: When will it end? And will it be successful? It will end, my friends, when the Soviet Union is prepared to come to terms with us on significant and meaningful security negotiations and on positive movement in the area of human rights.

As to whether Madrid will be successful, I have no hesitation in saying that it has been successful, is successful and will continue to be successful, because our commitment to human rights, to western solidarity, to western strength and to western values has been firm and unified. Madrid will continue to express the unified conscience of humanity.

The role of the United States is a role of leadership. The role of a leader is to march at the head of affairs - not to await the event so as to know what measures to take, but in

the words of Demosthenes, to take measures which, when we take them, produce the event.

I have talked about memories, and I have talked about realities. May I conclude with the reality of today, which will always be in my memory and which will be among the warmest and most satisfying of my memories during the brief period of my diplomatic life. The award is precious because it is presented to me by the Anti-Defamation League, one of the most valuable institutions for the expression and the extension of democratic values that exists in the world today. It is precious because it comes to me from friends. I am proud to be a part of the League, to be a part of you.

Thank you very much.

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