

COMMENTS OF SENATOR BOB DOLE
HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM GROUND-BREAKING CEREMONY
OCTOBER 16, 1985

MR. SECRETARY, MR. WIESEL, DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF THE
COUNCIL, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

FORTY YEARS AGO, GENERAL DWIGHT EISENHOWER VISITED ONE
OF THE RECENTLY LIBERATED CONCENTRATION CAMPS IN EUROPE.
KNOWING THAT IT WOULD BE A WRENCHING EXPERIENCE, EVEN FOR
SOMEONE USED TO THE TERRIBLE SIGHTS OF WAR, HE NONETHELESS
FELT HE HAD TO GO, "IN ORDER," HE SAID, "TO BE IN A POSITION
TO GIVE FIRST-HAND EVIDENCE OF THESE THINGS, IF EVER, IN THE
FUTURE, THERE DEVELOPS A TENDENCY TO CHARGE THESE
ALLEGATIONS MERELY TO 'PROPAGANDA'."

WE ARE HERE TODAY FOR THE SAME REASON. AFTER FOUR
DECADES, MEMORIES -- EVEN HORRIBLE MEMORIES -- CAN FADE.
AFTER FOUR DECADES, MANY OF THOSE WHO SURVIVED THE HOLOCAUST
AND COULD TELL US HOW IT REALLY WAS -- MANY OF THEM HAVE
PASSED FROM OUR MIDST. AND AFTER FOUR DECADES OF PEACE IN
EUROPE AND DRAMATIC POLITICAL CHANGES AROUND THE WORLD, WITH
FORMER ENEMIES NOW FAST FRIENDS AND FORMER ALLIES NOW OUR
ADVERSARIES, IT IS HARD SOMETIMES TO RECALL OR EVEN BELIEVE

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HOW SOMETHING SO VAST AND INHUMAN COULD EVER HAVE HAPPENED.

THE MUSEUM WHOSE CONSTRUCTION WE START TODAY WILL REMIND US THAT IT DID HAPPEN. EVEN MORE IMPORTANT, IT WILL REMIND US THAT -- UNLESS WE ARE VIGILANT IN OUR DEFENSE OF LIBERTY FOR ALL -- IT COULD HAPPEN AGAIN, TO ANY OF US.

THOUGH THE MASSIVE TRAGEDY OF THE HOLOCAUST FELL UPON THE JEWS OF EUROPE, THIS WILL NOT BE A JEWISH MUSEUM. THOUGH IT WILL SIT ON THIS IMPRESSIVE SITE IN OUR NATION'S CAPITAL, IT WILL NOT BE AN AMERICAN MUSEUM.

IT WILL BE A MUSEUM ABOUT, AND FOR, ALL THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD. IT WILL SPEAK WITH EQUAL MEANING AND IMPORTANCE TO US ALL. IF ANY OF US ARE FACED WITH PERSECUTION, NONE OF US WILL BE REALLY SECURE. IF ANY OF US BEGIN TO FORGET WHAT HAPPENED DURING THE HOLOCAUST, ALL OF US WILL FACE A GREATER RISK THAT IT COULD HAPPEN AGAIN.

AND IF ANY DOUBT THAT IT COULD, I WOULD ASK THEM TO TURN THEIR THOUGHTS AT THIS HOUR TO ROME, WHERE THE BODY OF LEON KLINGHOFFER IS ABOUT TO ARRIVE. WHEN PEOPLE DRIVEN BY IGNORANCE AND HATE CONTINUE TO MURDER, WHEN PEOPLE LIKE LEON KLINGHOFFER -- WHOSE ONLY "CRIME" IS THEIR RELIGION OR COLOR OR ETHNIC ORIGIN -- WHEN SUCH PEOPLE CONTINUE TO DIE, THEN

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IT CAN HAPPEN AGAIN. IF WE LET IT.

I HAVE BEEN PLEASED TO LEND MY EFFORTS IN A SMALL WAY TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF THIS MUSEUM. I AM GRATIFIED TO BE HERE TODAY, TO SEE THIS PHYSICAL EVIDENCE OF HOW FAR THE CAMPAIGN HAS COME IN SUCH A SHORT TIME.

OUR TASK, THOUGH, IS ONLY JUST BEGUN. LET ALL OF US CONTINUE TO WORK TOGETHER UNTIL THIS GREAT STRUCTURE IS COMPLETED. EVEN MORE IMPORTANT, LET ALL OF US CONTINUE TO WORK TOGETHER TO CREATE A WORLD IN WHICH THE HATRED OF PREJUDICE AND THE THREAT OF VIOLENCE WILL BE ONLY A MEMORY. THAT ALONE WILL BE A TRULY WORTHY MEMORIAL TO THOSE MILLIONS WHO LOST THEIR LIVES DURING THE HOLOCAUST.