

Speech by Rupert Murdoch

16th Annual Heritage Dinner

Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust

May 7, 2012

Good evening. Thanks to my friend Bob Morgenthau and the wonderful people who put this evening together. I am very happy to be here and if you've been reading the papers lately, you realize I'm pretty happy to be anywhere, particularly amongst such great friends.

I don't usually like to follow Roger Ailes since half the world is following me and the other half is chasing him, but it is comforting to be among friends and I am deeply honored by your Heritage Award.

I'm particularly touched to receive it here – in the shadow of the Statue of Liberty. As your fabulous exhibit on Emma Lazarus demonstrates, you don't have to be Jewish to appreciate what Lady Liberty stands for. But it helps.

Like the New Colossus Miss Lazarus celebrated, the museum you have given New York has become a great landmark itself. And every wall in this building speaks to the significance of Jewish life.

I believe these walls carry a lesson from history: The enemies of the Jews are enemies of freedom – and in this fight America can never be neutral!

Not two years ago, I spoke about the war against the Jews that continued even after the defeat of Nazi Germany.

Much of this war is focused on Israel. In the early years of the Jewish State, it took the form of attacks along the borders by Arab military forces. When that failed, we saw the rise of international terrorism, such as the infamous slaughter of Israeli athletes at the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich.

The attacks on Jews overseas continues. It is a war designed to make Jews feel unsafe wherever they call home – and to make the Jewish state an international target for haters.

Here among so many friends, I wish I could tell you that what I see makes me more optimistic. I wish I could tell you that in the face of these new threats, all those who cherish freedom have rallied to Israel's side. I wish I could tell you that the fears of Jewish communities in Europe are exaggerated. They are not. In fact, two years ago I said it was bad. Now the threat is worse.

The result is this: Many people seem more worried about an Israeli attack on Iran's nuclear facilities than about what would happen if we allow Iran to build nuclear weapons.

Let me be clear: we all want peace for the Middle East.

But when weak friends suggest that Israel may be part of the problem, we do nothing to encourage the peacemakers – and everything to embolden the warmakers. So when the prime minister of a democratic Israel says that he fears Iran means what it says and intends to wipe Israel off the face of the Earth, I will not second guess him from the safety of New York.

It is beyond dispute that almost anywhere we turn, the situation of Jews has grown more precarious in many parts of the world.

The most horrific example came just a few weeks ago -- in Toulouse, France. There a man who called himself an Islamic jihadist murdered three Jewish children and a rabbi in cold blood – along with three French paratroopers.

I do not pretend to understand the mind of a man who would assassinate schoolchildren. I do know that we have yet another

attack on the innocent that comes on a continent where Jews are increasingly concerned about whether authorities are willing or able to protect them.

Even more worrisome is the reaction I see from Europe. The European Union's foreign minister likened the calculated murder of Jewish schoolchildren to the Palestinian children inadvertently killed during Israeli response to terrorist attacks in Gaza.

Yet Israelis enjoy one tremendous advantage: They live in a free society. That freedom is the source of another key advantage: Israel's innovation. It is also the source of my optimism about her future.

The capital that drives Israel is human. It allows Israelis to recycle their waste water ... to make barren deserts bear fruit ... and to become a global leader in hi-tech. Two writers described this success in a recent book called "Start Up Nation." Can you imagine any other society in the Middle East being called a "start up nation?"

Now that same enterprising spirit is being applied to protecting the Israelis from attack.

When fully deployed, new technologies will give Israel the most modern and comprehensive defense against rockets and missiles in the world.

And by the way, they are sharing these advances. Just as the Israelis saved American lives in Iraq and Afghanistan by sharing their methods for stopping IEDs and protecting tanks, they are sharing their anti-missile advances. So we have a real stake in their success, not just as friends but as brothers in arms.

No one hopes for a war, and I am not calling for an attack on Iran's nuclear facilities.

But I do say this:

The cause of peace will be better served if Israel has the ability to take out those facilities if the moment comes when it has to. I believe the same incentive holds true for a negotiated solution. As John F. Kennedy famously said, "Let us never negotiate out of fear, but let us never fear to negotiate."

So much of our debate is over nonsense about what Iran's nuclear "capability" means. The Israelis know what it means when people who threaten to kill Jews get the technology that will let them do so. Surely that is one message of this fine museum.

The Israelis know another uncomfortable truth: that true peace is better served when Iran and the world have no doubt that Israel will stop Iran's nuclear program if she determines no one and nothing else will.

To my mind, that is the grand promise of Zionism: that Israel exists so that Jews can protect themselves.

To defend itself, Israel's resolve is as vital as her technology.

I believe that it is no longer just Israel's survival at stake but our own.

So I end where I started: with this remarkable building. Everything in this building is a testament to the richness of Jewish life.

Ladies and gentlemen, Israel exists so that when we look for examples of a vibrant Jewish culture, we will not have to find it in a museum.

To the horror of its critics, Israel insists on defending itself and staying alive. In other words, to do what Jews have been commanded to do since the days of the Torah: to choose life.

Thank you for listening. Thank you for this honor. And thank you for the great work of this museum.

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